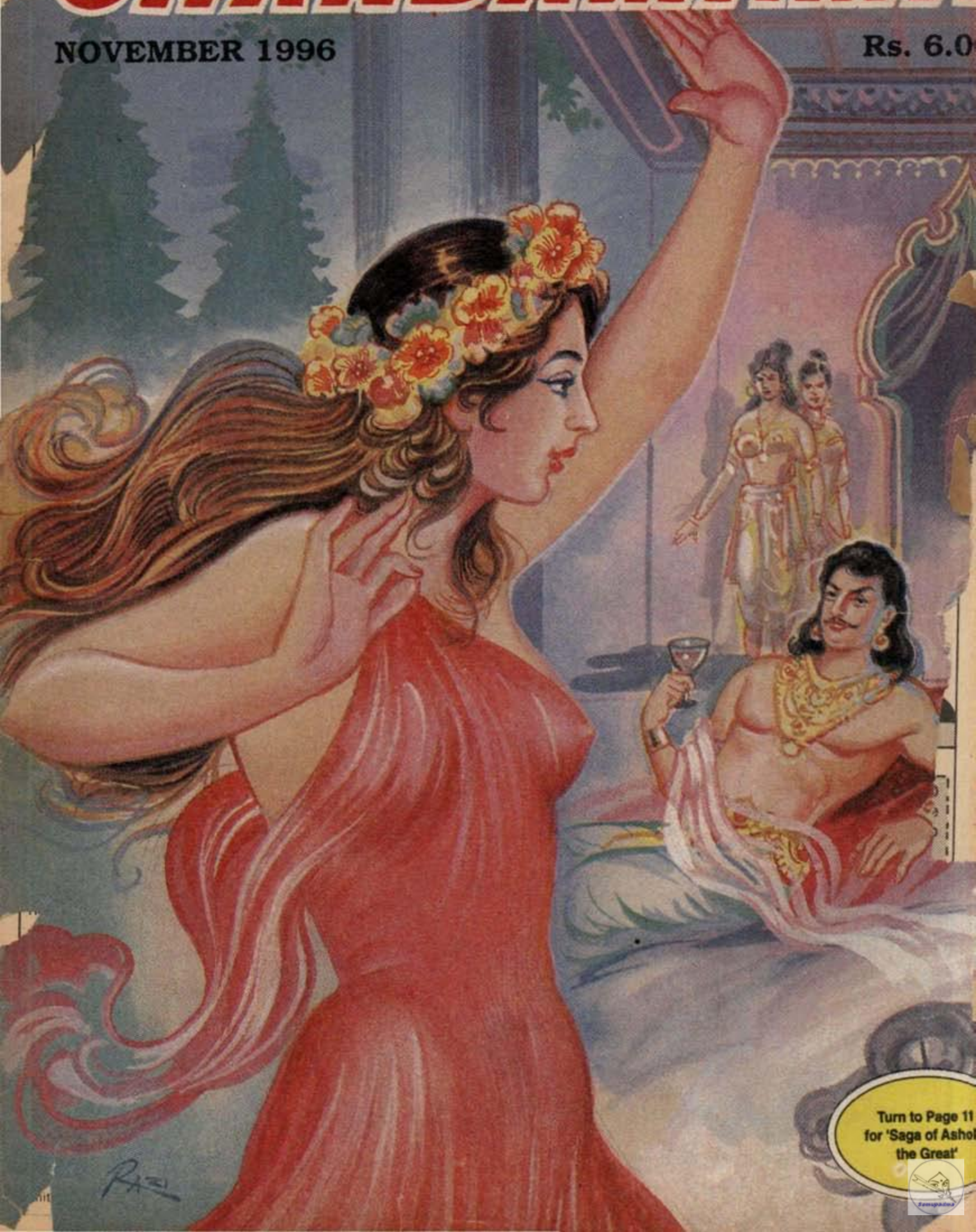


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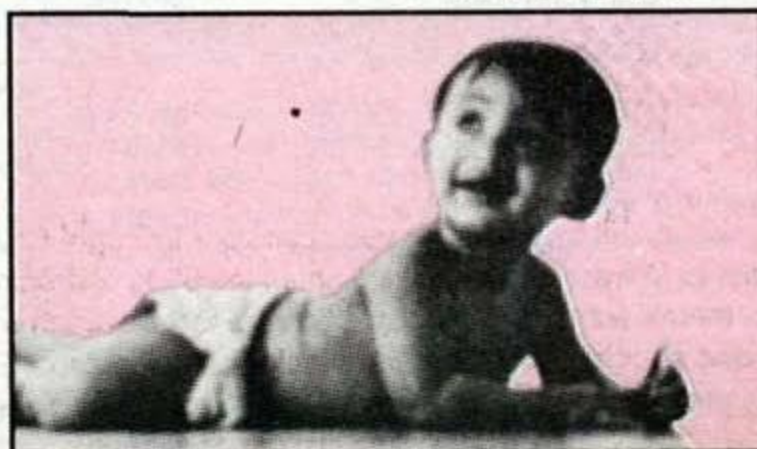
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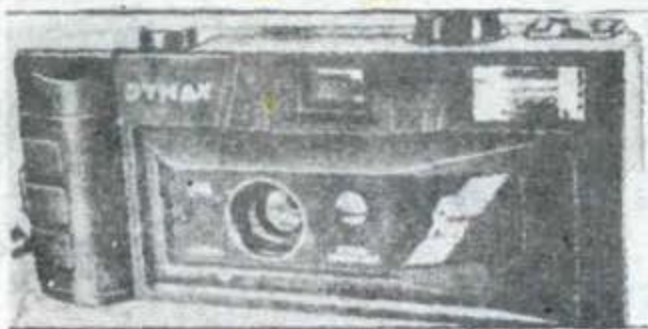
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# CHANDAMAMA

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Vol.27 DECEMBER 1996 No. 6

**MAHABHARATA:** The Pandava princes reach the kingdom of Matsya to spend a year of exile incognito. Yudhishtira has been readily accepted as a courtier by King Virata, who spends a lot of time playing dice with him. Bheema's culinary talents are appreciated by one and all. Arjuna proves himself to be a capable dance teacher. Nakula is an expert groom in the royal stable, while Sahadeva tends the cows and sheep in the palace. The queen's brother, Kichaka, falls in love with Draupadi, who attends on the queen. She persuades Draupadi to meet Kichaka. She is in a dilemma. Who will rescue her? Will someone then recognise the Pandavas?

**EMPEROR PULAKESAN:** The great Chalukya ruler sends his soldiers to guard Ganganagar where strange things have been happening, much to the dismay of the villagers. On receipt of disturbing reports Pulakesan himself visits the village and has reasons to believe that the headman himself may be the source of the villagers' woes. Nagayya is suspicious of the stranger to whom he has given shelter in his cattle-shed, though with reluctance. Pulakesan escapes an attempt to poison him. The headman's servants search for the missing horse-rider and they bring in news that the well-guarded well has been discovered. What does it contain? Where is it removed? Are they safe in the new hide-out?

**IMMORTAL FRIENDSHIP** comes to an exciting end, and Coastal Journeys reveals more and more facets of the hoary past of the landmarks which the Bay of Bengal skirts.

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Founder: CHAKRAPANI  
Controlling Editor : NAGI REDDI

## **Education for girls—an equal birthright**

Recently, we celebrated Teachers Day and observed World Literacy Day. On both occasions, our leaders in their speeches touched upon the value of education. Many of them did not forget to stress on the need to educate girls, saying they should not be denied what the leaders called their "birthright".

We recall that many, many years ago, Mahatma Gandhi had made a remark: "When you educate a man, you educate an individual; but when you educate a woman, you educate a family, a nation." Our country considers him as the greatest upholder of women's rights and emancipation.

Why emancipation? Till probably a hundred years ago, very few girls were sent to schools. They were confined to their homes and trained to cook and sew, so that in later life, they would make suitable housewives and rear families.

Even when the portals of schools and colleges were thrown open to girls, their parents hesitated to allow them to go for higher studies, as they feared that equally well qualified suitors for their hands would be available only for a hefty price called 'dowry'.

Fortunately, things have changed for girls and we find them competing with their male counterparts in every sphere of life. Yet, a large number of girls, especially in families living below the so-called 'poverty line', are still denied the luxury of education. It is time the girl child started asserting herself and sought what has been assured to them in the Constitution.

---

**A HAPPY DIWALI TO ALL CHANDAMAMA READERS!**



## A PRIZE FOR PEACE

Peace is yet to come to East Timor in full measure, but the Nobel Prize for Peace this year has reached that tiny island in Indonesia, when the Award Committee chose two leaders, who have been carrying on a non-violent fight for independence for that island, for the coveted prize. They are Carlos Filipe Belo, Bishop of Timor, and Mr. Jose Ramos-Horta, who has been espousing the cause of East Timor from outside the island.

For nearly five centuries, East Timor was a Portuguese possession. Soon after the Second World War, when colonialism was being wiped off from the face of the earth, the Timorese people also began clamouring for independence. Their fight for freedom reached a crucial stage in 1975 when the Portuguese rulers suddenly decided to quit the island without making any arrangement for a smooth transition. Fretelin, the leftist organisation which had been spearheading the freedom struggle, declared independence from the capital, Dili. Indonesia could not brook the separatist movement in East Timor, and sent its troops to contain Fretelin. It is said that nearly 200,000 Timorese were killed in the armed struggle. In July 1976, the island was annexed as the 27th province of Indonesia.

However, the United Nations has till now not recognised East Timor as a part of Indonesia.

On November 12, 1991, in Dili, the Indonesian army opened fire against a 3,000 strong crowd of mourners at the funeral of a human rights activist. More

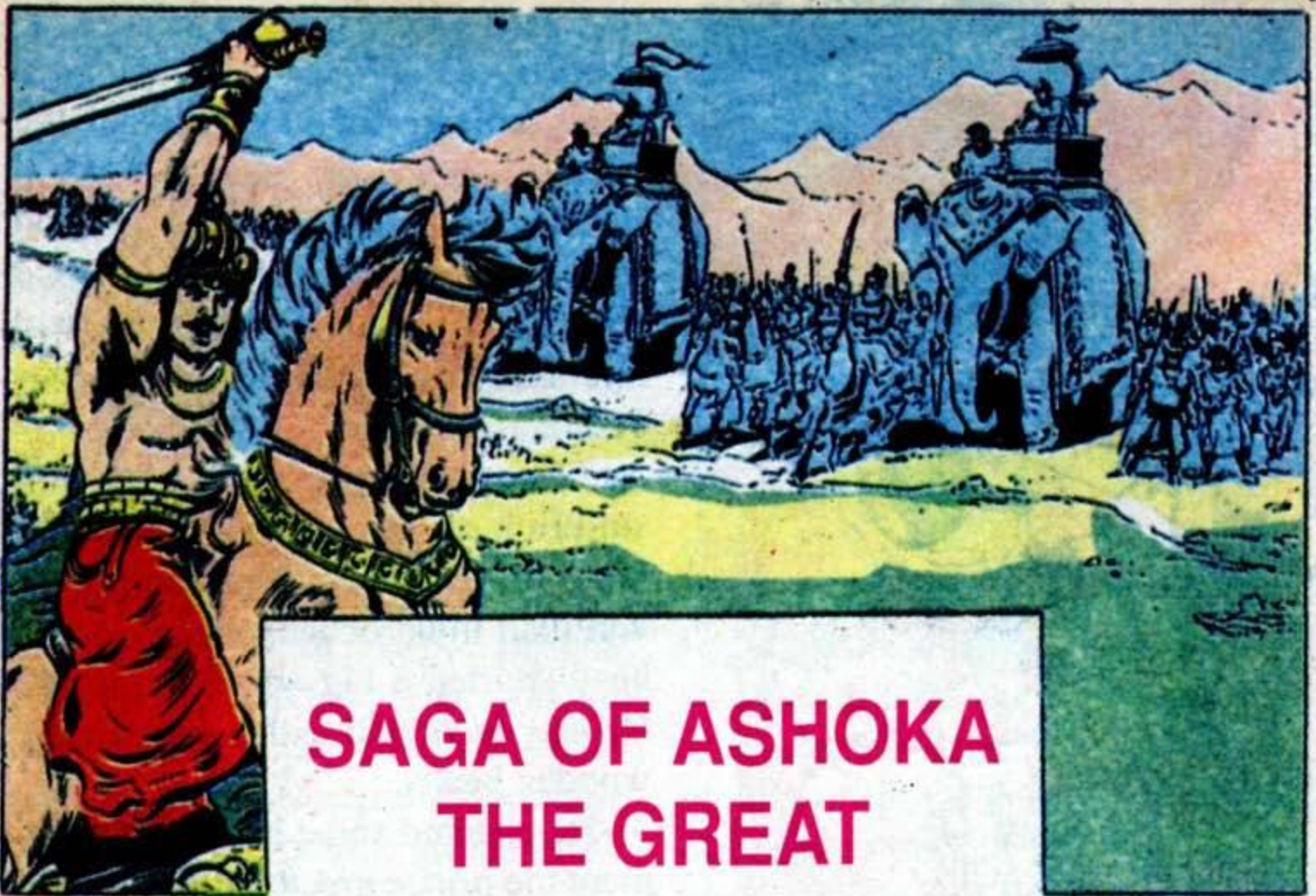
than 50 people were killed in the firing. Soon afterwards, the leader of Fretelin, Mr. Xanana Gusmao, was imprisoned. He is yet to be released.

Mr. Ramos-Horta, a Timorese leader, went into self-exile in 1975 and had been working for the country's independence from outside. For several years, he represented—though unofficially—East Timor at the U.N. As the island was not granted even an observer status, Mr. Ramos-Horta decided to leave New York and settled in Australia, from where he has continued to be East Timor's international spokesman.

Indonesia is the largest Muslim nation in the world. Some 80 per cent of the people of East Timor are, however, Christians. Bishop Belo was posted to the island in 1983 and he supported the aspirations of the people. In 1989, he wrote to the U.N., suggesting holding of a referendum after the withdrawal of the Indonesian army from the island. Before the U.N. could react, Indonesian authorities imprisoned several people who supported the Bishop's suggestion. Ever since then, Bishop Belo from within East Timor and Mr. Ramos-Horta from outside have been striving for "a just and peaceful solution of the conflict in East Timor" which has now earned them the prestigious Peace Award.







## SAGA OF ASHOKA THE GREAT

*(The story so far: Of the several sons of King Vindusara of Magadha, two are in the limelight. One is Sushima, the eldest prince, and the other is Ashoka, born to a Brahmin wife of the king. While Sushima is very selfish and cruel, Ashoka is able and brave. Sushima is sent to Taxila, while Ashoka is in Ujjain. The king is critically ill. Both princes are in the process of being summoned. Yasa, a good friend of Ashoka, sends two dancing girls to Taxila to delay Sushima's arrival.)*

**P**rince Ashoka was just back from a hunting expedition. "I'm tired, Vidisha," he told his wife.

"You're only physically tired. I look forward to the day when you are mentally tired of killing birds and animals," said Vidisha Devi with a sigh.

Ashoka smiled. "It's the only sport in which I find some excitement and joy. I don't kill any creature for eating its meat!"

"That's worse, my lord! That

means you find pleasure in only killing!"

"Today I killed a tiger and a leopard. Don't you think I've thereby saved a number of smaller creatures in the forest, deer, rabbits and all that, which they would have killed for their food?" demanded the prince.

"O Prince, you aren't unwise. You know very well that lions, tigers and such other beasts have no violence in their nature. They kill for their own

### 10. THE CRITICAL HOUR STRIKES





survival. They've no idea of good and bad, of desirable and undesirable. You, like all the other men, are gifted with such a sense. The animals kill out of their instinct. They can't do otherwise. You choose to kill, more for fun than for anything else. The difference between the two conducts is great, my lord!" rejoined Vidisha Devi.

It was just then that the chief maid of the castle entered the room. Bowing to the prince, she said, "The soothsayer from Varanasi is waiting for you in the audience chamber, my lord!"

"A soothsayer?" asked Vidisha Devi with some surprise.

"I had forgotten to tell you about

him. He's believed to be a great soothsayer who not only predicts one's future, but also shows the easy way to achieve it. He's here on a pilgrimage to the Mahakal temple, and our friend, the famous merchant Lalitadatta, recommended him to me," said Prince Ashoka, as he got up and left the room.

The soothsayer and Lalitadatta stood up as the prince entered the audience chamber. The soothsayer was clad in an ochre robe; his forehead sported a big vermilion mark. He was decorated with a necklace of wooden beads.

He chanted some hymns the moment the prince greeted him with his palms folded. Then he took the right hand of the prince into his hands and stood in silence, his eyes closed. A few moments later, he opened his eyes and smiled broadly.

"O Prince!" he exclaimed. "The auspicious moment has come!"

"For what?"

"For you to proclaim independence!"

"From whom?" asked Ashoka, surprised.

"What I mean is, you're destined to become a king, and the time has come when you should declare Avanti to be a sovereign kingdom and crown yourself the king!" said the soothsayer.

"But that would mean a revolt against my father, the monarch over



the Magadha empire!”

“Precisely. That’s the way to your own becoming a monarch! There’s nothing wrong in taking such a step, now that your father is critically ill and he has already chosen his successor, who is Prince Sushima.”

“Is my father critically ill?”

“He is. But you must not rush to Pataliputra. That way I see danger to your life. In fact, you must not leave Ujjain for at least a year to come.”

Someone was seen peeping through the window. That was unusual, for the castle guards never allowed anybody to approach the audience chamber when the prince was in a meeting.

With his brow raised, Ashoka strained his neck and looked askance. His face brightened up. “Come in, dear brother, come in!” he ex-

claimed.

Yasa entered. “I was wondering who could have the audacity to peep through the window!” said Ashoka hugging his dearest friend.

“We beg your leave!” said merchant Lalitadatta and the soothsayer.

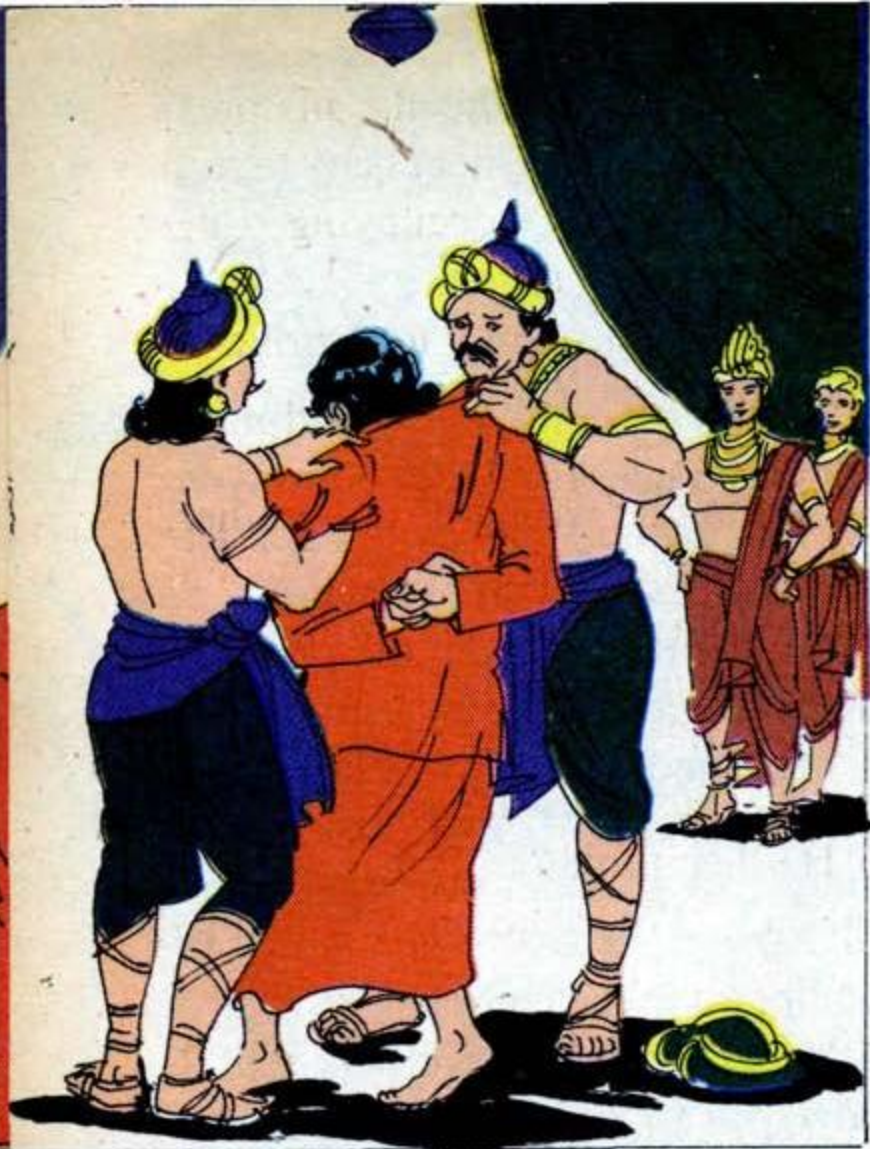
“You cannot!” shouted Yasa. He even laid his hand on his sword.

“Is this the courtesy the prince’s guest must receive from a stranger?”

“This and worse would be what a spy deserves! Man, I may be a stranger to you, but not you to me, Shikharsen! I’ve seen you in Pataliputra in the company of Prince Sushima’s younger brothers and I know you’re one of those who are eager to prevent Prince Ashoka from proceeding to Pataliputra. I expected some such mischief. The moment I heard that a soothsayer is counselling







the prince, I grew suspicious, for they become quite active at crucial times. Now, confess, you fraud, come out with your plan!”

Yasa gave Shikharsen a shake.

Shikharsen's face paled. His friend, merchant Lalitadatta, trembled. Yasa clapped his hands. Two guards came dashing.

“Do I have your approval in tying the hands of these fellows and dumping them in a dungeon?” Yasa asked Ashoka.

“Of course, you have, my friend!”

The guards led the deceivers away.

“They wanted you to tarry here and not to proceed to Pataliputra. You don't have a single supporter among

your awfully envious step-brothers. They are plotting to thwart any effort by you to reach Pataliputra to claim the throne, in case the king dies. And, the king may die any moment. Shikharsen belongs to Taxila. He was studying the situation in Pataliputra on behalf of Prince Sushima. Fools that they are, they were trying to arouse a lesser ambition in you - to declare yourself the king of a province - so that you would not think of the emperor's throne!” explained Yasa.

He then reported to Ashoka all about his mission to Pataliputra, his meeting with his father, and his mother, and about the king's health taking a critical turn.

“My friend, you must hurry to the capital. I've some inkling about the thinking of the prime minister, the commander of the army, and the nobles. Barring a few courtiers who, for their own interest, would support Sushima, nobody wants him to succeed to the throne. He who reaches Pataliputra first would have a greater chance to be crowned the king.”

Yasa paused. Prince Ashoka sat pensive. Suddenly, there appeared Vidisha Devi.

“O my brother!” she greeted Yasa with joy. “How unkind of you not to have sent word to me that you're already back!”

“My sister, I would have met you



in a moment from now. Believe me," pleaded Yasa.

"I believe you. Just now two messengers have arrived from Pataliputra. They're waiting to see you," said Vidisha Devi, looking at Prince Ashoka.

"They're welcome. I know the message they've brought. Prince Ashoka must proceed to Pataliputra immediately. The royal court must have sent a similar message to Sushima. The officers closest to the king have acted faithfully and impartially," observed Yasa.

"Must the prince go?" Vidisha Devi asked Yasa, pointing her hand at her husband.

"He must, my sister!"

"But why?" asked Vidisha Devi.

"Morally, it is necessary for a son to be present near his father when the

latter is dying. Politically, his presence in the capital is necessary to stop Sushima from occupying the throne."

"But isn't it wrong to deprive an elder brother from becoming the king?"

"It may be wrong to the brother, but to let him become the king would mean doing wrong to millions of King Vindusar's subjects, to the empire left by the great Chandragupta Maurya," explained Yasa.

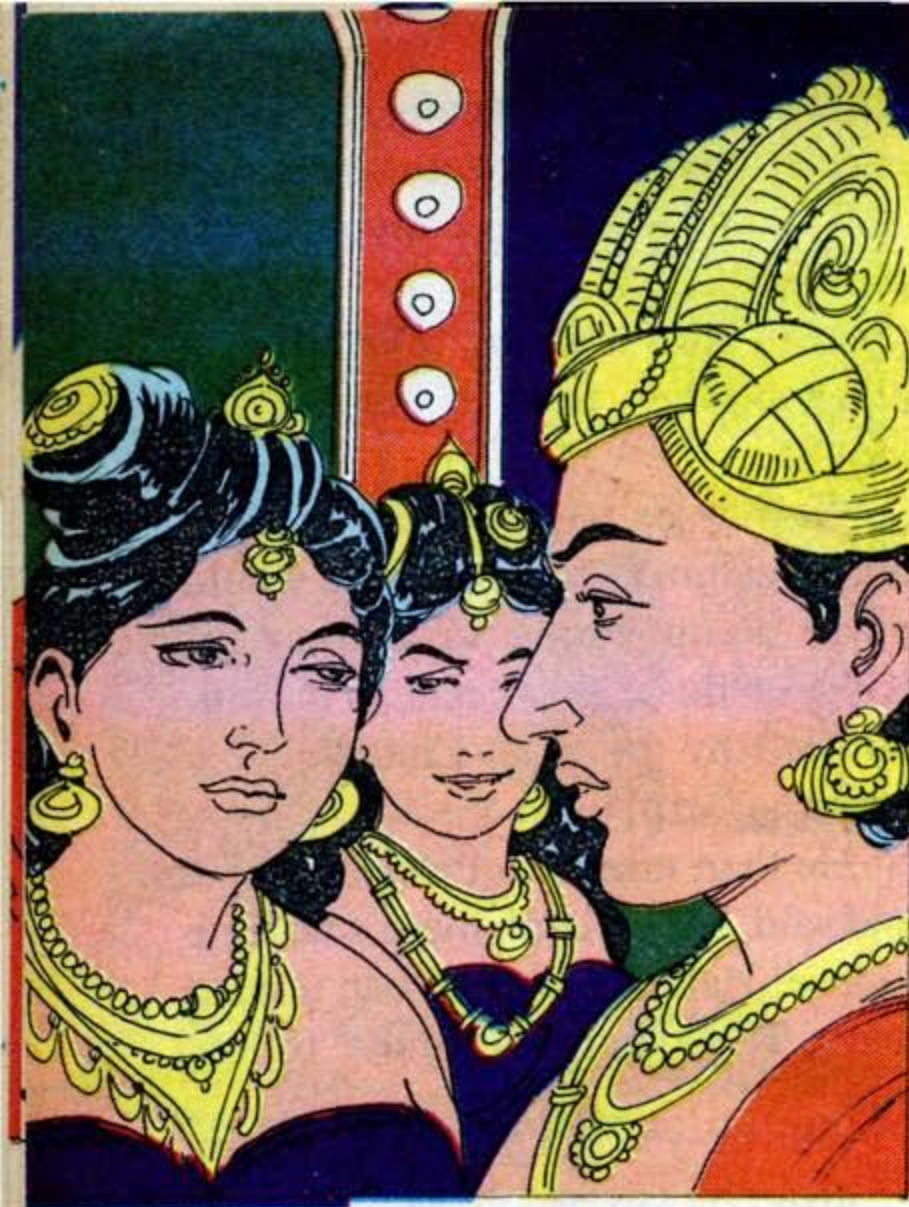
He then turned to Prince Ashoka and said, "My friend, there's no time to lose! Half of our army can remain here. The other half must follow you."

☆☆☆

"What's this I see?" cried out Prince Sushima, taking his lips off his cup of wine.







It was night. Sushima was drinking and enjoying a dance by a Greek damsel. Suddenly, the two dancing girls, whom he had once despatched to kill Ashoka, appeared before him. They had Sushima's secret seal on their rings. Anyone in possession of that could gain entry to his presence any time.

"But do you think I don't know what you were doing? You were serving Ashoka's wife because she saved you from death when you foolish girls failed to kill that chap!" muttered Sushima. "Isn't the report I received from my spies true?"

"O great, glorious Prince, it's true. But we never forgot the mission on which you sent us. You may call us

foolish because we could not kill Ashoka immediately, but did you believe that we gave up? Never!" said the older girl.

"Then?" Sushima sounded quite excited.

The two girls looked meaningfully at the Greek damsel.

At a hint from Prince Sushima, the damsel withdrew from the room.

"Tell me, dear girls, have you at last finished him off?" Sushima asked.

"But first assure us that you haven't forgotten the reward you had promised us!" The older girl said with a wink.

"How can I? If tomorrow I ascend the throne, your reward will be doubled. Now, come on, tell me how you killed that braggart, that offspring of a servant-girl!"

"O Prince, what we have done is worse than killing him. We mixed a deadly potion in his food. As a result, he lies paralysed, unable to move."

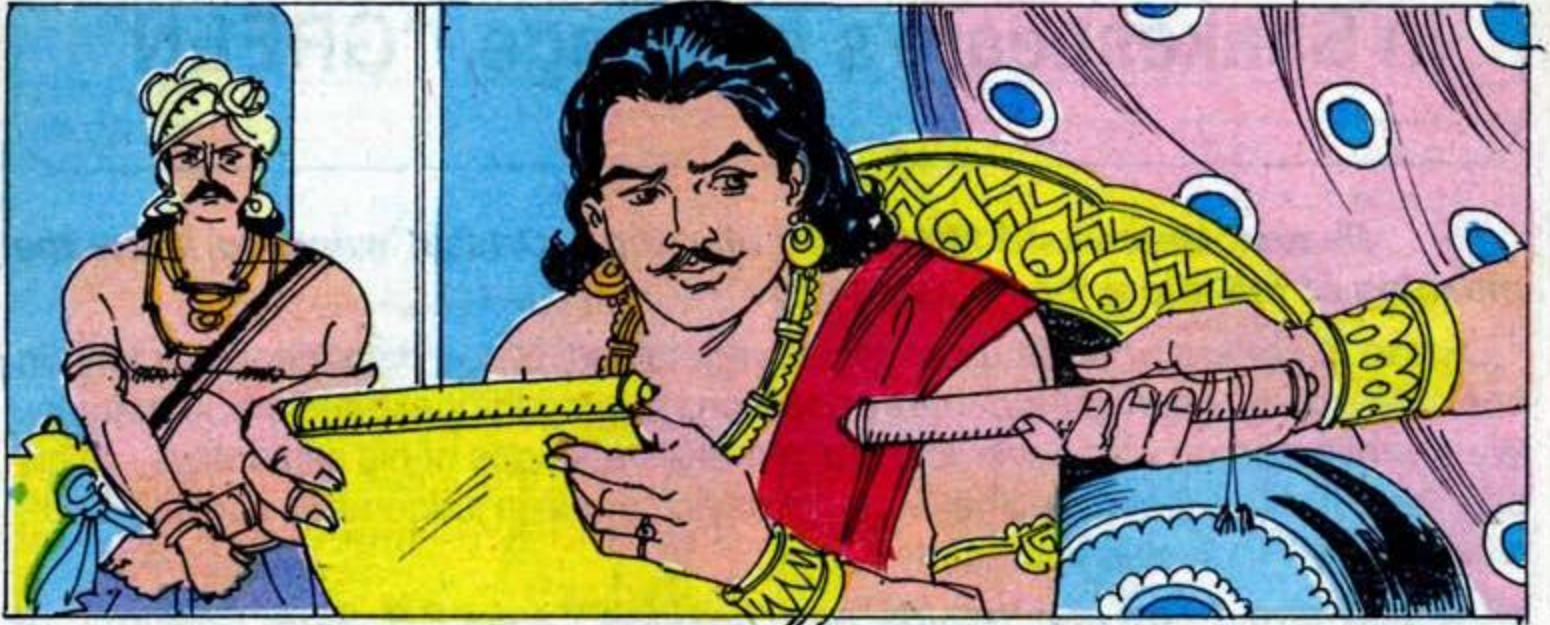
"But why did you not make the potion stronger, bringing about his death?"

"That would have resulted in our being captured and perhaps brought to the king's presence for trial. Now, nobody suspects us. At the same time, your purpose is served. He shall never be able to sit up in his bed, not to speak of sitting on the throne!"

"Bravo!" shouted Prince Sushima.







There were knocks on the door. "Come in," said the prince.

It was his personal servant. "My lord," said the young man, "two messengers from Pataliputra, sent by the royal court, wish to meet you urgently. They've also brought a letter from your mother, the chief queen."

"Usher them in," ordered Prince Sushima.

The messengers entered and bowed down to the prince. One of them handed him two letters. The first one was from the prime minister, informing of King Vindusara's critical condition and requesting him to

reach the capital soon. The second letter, written by his mother, urged upon him to start at once, for she feared that Ashoka too might stake his claim to the throne if he managed to reach earlier!

Prince Sushima dismissed the messengers. "My innocent mother does not know what you ladies have done to the unlucky Ashoka!" he said and burst into a laughter. "I need not be in a hurry. Tomorrow a Greek merchant is coming to meet me. He has promised me a large diamond in lieu of my permission to him to sell his wares in Taxila. Ha! ha!"

(To continue)

- It is easy to add things Invented already
- The beaten path is the safe path



## In Shakespeare's language, "GREEN"

★ **Reader Meenakshi Misra, of Luhasinga, Orissa, wants to know the meaning of the idiom 'one's salad days'.**

Salad is generally made up of green vegetables. Salad days denote a time in one's life—youth—when one is carefree and is prone to exhibit inexperience, immaturity. We say of a person who never lost the immature attitudes of his salad days. In his play *Antony and Cleopatra*, Shakespeare says : "green in judgement, cold in blood", where 'green' indicates immaturity.

★ **Where do we use 'beside' and 'besides'? asks P.S. Sarat Chandra, of Secunderabad.**

The simple meaning of 'beside' is, by the side of or near, as is used in the sentence : 'The mother sat beside the child, telling her a story'. The word can also mean 'over/above', like in: "That is beside the point", to denote something irrelevant. Whereas 'besides' mean something extra, or additional. Here is a usage: "His hobbies are stamp-collection and coin-collecting, besides music and photography."

★ **Reader A.K. Basu, of Sheikhpura, Midnapur (W.Bengal), wants to know the meaning of the foreign phrases 'note verbale' and 'numero uno', often seen in newspapers these days.**

The first simply means a verbal note, a note of instructions conveyed orally and not in writing. The second one means Number one—something or someone topping a list.

★ **Why is a watch called 'watch'? asks Rupesh Shinde, of Nipani.**

Long before clocks and watches were invented, the word 'watch' meant a period of time when someone remained awake to keep a vigil. This duty was assigned to soldiers in forts and castles and palaces. That is how the expression 'watchman' came into being. Such people did their duty by turn, keeping time with the help of the position of the moon and stars at night and of the sun during the day. When clocks came to be invented, time was divided into hours, minutes and seconds. Clocks and watches help us regulate our activities.

★ **What is the meaning of 'de' in the expressions 'de facto' and 'de jure'? asks Malay Kumar Tripathy, of Palanipal.**

Both expressions are derived from Latin, in which 'de' means 'by'. A newspaper/magazine can have a de jure (by law) editor and also a 'de facto' (by fact) editor—the former recognised by law and the latter who actually carries out the functions of the editor.





# IMMORTAL FRIENDSHIP - 7

By BUJJAI

CITIZENS  
GATHER IN  
FRONT OF  
KING  
PRACHANDA'S  
PALACE,  
WHERE  
SINGHI DORA  
HAS BEEN  
TIED TO THE  
GALLOWS.



*You're a fool! Your friend  
is a bigger scoundrel! He  
hasn't come to save you!*



*Sure, Sumitra will  
certainly come un-  
less, God forbid, he  
is in danger!*



*We've sent our men  
to finish him off on  
the way!*



*Good!*

*Citizens! Listen to me! This Singhi Dora  
had volunteered to die, to save our enemy  
Sumitra!*



*Sumitra promised to return within seven days  
to undergo the death sentence and save Singhi  
Dora. But, he hasn't returned till now!*



*This fool believed him,  
risking his own life!*



*He'll never go back on his  
word! Maybe, your men at-  
tacked him on the way!*



*Shut up! Hang  
this fellow!*

*Stop! Stop!*





SUMITRA  
ARRIVES IN  
DISGUISE.

*In this disguise, I could  
hoodwink your guards and  
reach here in time!*



*Sumitra! Why have  
you come back?*



*Ah! He fooled us!*



*O, King! Release brother Singhi  
Dora, and hang me instead!*



*Dear friend! Have you  
left your poor wife and  
son and come back merely  
to die?*



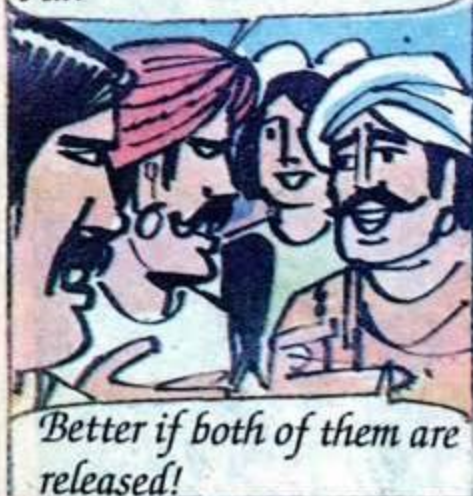
*Such a noble man!*

*Ha! Great!*

*We haven't seen such a  
great man before!*



*Left his family to save his  
friend! What sacrifice! Ah!  
Ha!*



*Better if both of them are  
released!*

THE ROYAL  
GUARDS ARREST  
SUMITRA.



*Pray, release  
Singhi Dora!*

*Tie this man also to  
the gallows!*



**MUSIC WILL NOT CURE THE TOOTHACHE**



THE KING'S MEN  
BRING SUMITRA  
ALSO TO THE  
GALLOWS.



Release  
Singhi  
Dora!!

Two birds in one shot!  
Ha! Ha! Ha!



Sumitra! I warned you not  
to believe them!



How unjust! Re-  
lease him!

How cruel!



We thought the king  
would release both!  
He's a monster! Not a  
king!



Curse upon him! Better we die  
than live in this kingdom!



Let's revolt and march  
on them!

Why delay?  
Hang them!



PEOPLE  
GET  
ENRAGED!

Stop!

No more can  
we tolerate!



(To conclude)

**FIRST DESERVE, THEN DESIRE**



## The woes of a village



**T**he time was when Pulakesan sat on the throne of the mighty Chalukya empire. One day, he was holding court, listening to people's grievances, consoling them, and promising suitable action. Suddenly, a group of people rose from the floor where they were sitting. The emperor's attention was caught. "Yes, my brothers, where are you from? And what submission do you wish to make?"

One of the men stepped forward and bowed low. "Your majesty, we're from Ganganagar, beyond the hills, and we come to you in great distress."

"I thought Ganganagar led a peaceful life," remarked Pulakesan. "I'm sorry to hear from you that it is not so. Tell me, what's happening there?"

"Your majesty, we don't know how to describe our agony," the man continued, "but for the past few weeks, there have been strange happenings. Many villagers have died of some unknown disease; our children who would have just gone out to play never returned, they had just vanished; there have been mysterious fires breaking out at the dead of night; and our cattle and other livestock





have perished without any apparent reason. People fear that our village has been taken over by some evil spirit, that it has taken possession of their lands, so much so many of them have already fled the place. Those who have remained happen to be so poor that they can't possibly leave their homesteads. Please, your majesty, do something to save us !”

The others in his group cried in chorus, “Your majesty! Please save us!”

“My good brethren,” said Pulakesan, “you may go back to Ganganagar peacefully. I shall send my guards to the village; they’ll camp there and give you protection, till the evil spirit, if there be any, is driven out for ever.”

On being reassured by the emperor himself, the men from Ganganagar left the palace for their village. A week would have passed when the emperor had an unexpected late night visitor. Apparently, the matter was urgent.

“You, Dayanand!” the emperor recognised his army commander. “What urgency brings you to the palace at this hour?”

“Bad news, your majesty,” said Dayanand, almost in a whisper. “Five of the guards whom we sent to Ganganagar have died of an unknown malady, according to the villagers. On receiving the news, I went there myself and took a look at the bodies.



My experienced eye tells me that they had died of poisoning. There seems to be some deep villainy afoot, your majesty, and I've no doubt about it.”

“I, too, have the same suspicion, Dayanand,” agreed the emperor. “The villagers' complaint definitely has deeper roots. If you get news of any more happenings, do let me know immediately.”

A few days later, the deserted grasslands of Ganganagar heard the sound of a horse's hooves fast approaching the village. Both the steed and the rider were covered all over with a thick layer of dust, and anyone would have easily guessed that they had travelled a long distance non-stop.

The horse stopped in front of the







biggest dwelling in the village. The rider, who was wearing a beard, dismounted. The master of the house had evidently seen the horse stopping in front of his place. So, he opened the door and came out. He was stout and dark and had a greasy look. By his side stood two hefty men — probably his servants — but they carried spears in their hands. “Who are you?” asked the stout man of the horse-rider. “And what errand has brought you to *my* village?” The authoritative tone of his query indicated that he was the headman of the village. His name was Nagayya.

“Oh! *Your* village, sir?” responded the visitor. He was of medium height, slim, but sported an active, vigorous

frame. “I was under the impression that I was well within the boundaries over which Emperor Pulakesan holds sway.”

“That’s what you *think!*” said Nagayya with a sneer. As a matter of fact, I own more than half of the village and the grasslands around. And anyone speaks of any authority other than mine will be dealt with as I deem fit, because I’m the law-giver here!” as he said this, he was seen giving a nod to his armed servants.

Before they could move forward, the horse-rider held out a warning: “It might have been so till now, but there’s none in this land who is capable of facing my sword! Being a loyal subject of his majesty, neither my hand nor my sword had ever brooked whenever the emperor’s name had been referred to disparagingly,” he added, and continued, “Be that as it may, I’ve come here only to seek shelter and food for my horse and myself, if you’ll be good enough to provide them. If not, I shall seek them elsewhere.”

Nagayya grimaced. It was obvious that he was not accustomed to people talking to him in such a nonchalant manner. “You may take your horse to the stables, and remain there with the animal. For, tramps like you don’t deserve any better accommodation. And I would advise you to leave the village at dawn, for, this place is not conducive to strangers poking their nose into matters they have no busi-



ness to," the headman said sternly.

The stranger was not quite ready to leave the matter there. "I travel as it pleases me," he responded, unconcerned about the headman's warning. "I shall leave your stables at dawn, but I shall be very much in the village and the bare grasslands around as long as I like, and leave the place as and when it suits me." He then caught hold of the horse's reins as if he was ready to lead it to the stables. On seeing this, Nagayya turned back to re-enter his house.

At the stable, as the stranger unbuckled the waist-band holding the sword and was about to lay down on the haystack for a night's rest, one of the headman's servants came with a plate of food and jug of water. "Leave it on the floor; I shall eat it when I'm hungry," the visitor said. After the

man had gone, the stranger stealthily came out of the stables and waited for a stray dog to pass by. When he saw one, he threw a portion of the food to the dog. No sooner had it eaten the food than it developed convulsions and lay dead. It was quite evident that the food had been poisoned. He dragged the dog to a corner of the stable and contemplated his next move.

The next day, Nagayya was awakened by one of his men. He appeared excited. "What's it?" Nagayya asked him, apparently irritated.

"Master! The horse-rider is gone!" the man managed to mumble.

"You mean he's dead, don't you?" Nagayya asked him, now impatiently.

"No, master! He has disappeared with his horse!" the man blurted.

—Ravi Kumar  
(To continue)







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—Ravi Kumar  
(To continue)





# NEWS FLASH

## A collar for elephant

How does one follow the movements of an elephant? Go after the animal as it goes through jungles and forests? This may not always be practicable. The next best thing is probably to give it a collar fixed with a tiny radio device. One can, with the help of a remote control, then monitor the animal's movements. A female elephant was the other day seen leading a herd in the Jaldapara Sanctuary, in West Bengal. The 'leader' was tranquilised to fix the collar. Now, the Wild Life Division can monitor the movements of the entire herd, which obediently follows the leader. This is the fifth instance of a radio-collar for an elephant; however, in all earlier instances, collars were fixed on male elephants, which travel by themselves.

## A beauty among camels

She is called Bint Hamloul, or "Daughter of Hamloul", this camel which was recently sold for a record price of 390,000 U.S. dollars (nearly Rs. 1.37 crores). Camel racing is a popular sport in most of the Gulf countries, but the breeders in Oman have the fastest camels. Racing camels are normally priced \$ 8,000. The record till now was \$260,000, but "Bint" was worth \$ 390,000 to an anonymous buyer in the United Arab Emirates. He found her the fastest among racing camels. No wonder he calls her a 'beauty'.

## Record price for Indian paintings

The well-known auctioneers of London, Sothebys, had on October 8 put as many as 150 paintings by Indian artists "to the hammer". Among them were Raja Ravi Varma (1848-1906) and M.F. Hussain, who is currently the most well-known among Indian painters. The first lot of ten paintings put up for auction that day had eight by Ravi Varma, who incidentally was a scion of the royal family of Travancore (now a part of Kerala). One of the paintings was catalogued for £5,000 (Rs.2,80,000), but it went for £25,300 (Rs. 14,16,800)—the maximum price paid for any painting that day. All his seven other paintings were sold for prices above £20,000 (Rs.11,20,200). There was one painting by Rabindranath Tagore which was bought for £18,400 (Rs.9,13,040). Hussain's works did not go anywhere near that range.

## Policeman 'Mac'

The San Jose (California) police force has a robot policeman—Officer Mac. Like his counterparts in uniform, 'he' was also formally sworn in early in October. Mac will be out in the streets educating citizens about crime prevention.







New Tales of King Vikram and the Vampire

## THE RARE RAGA

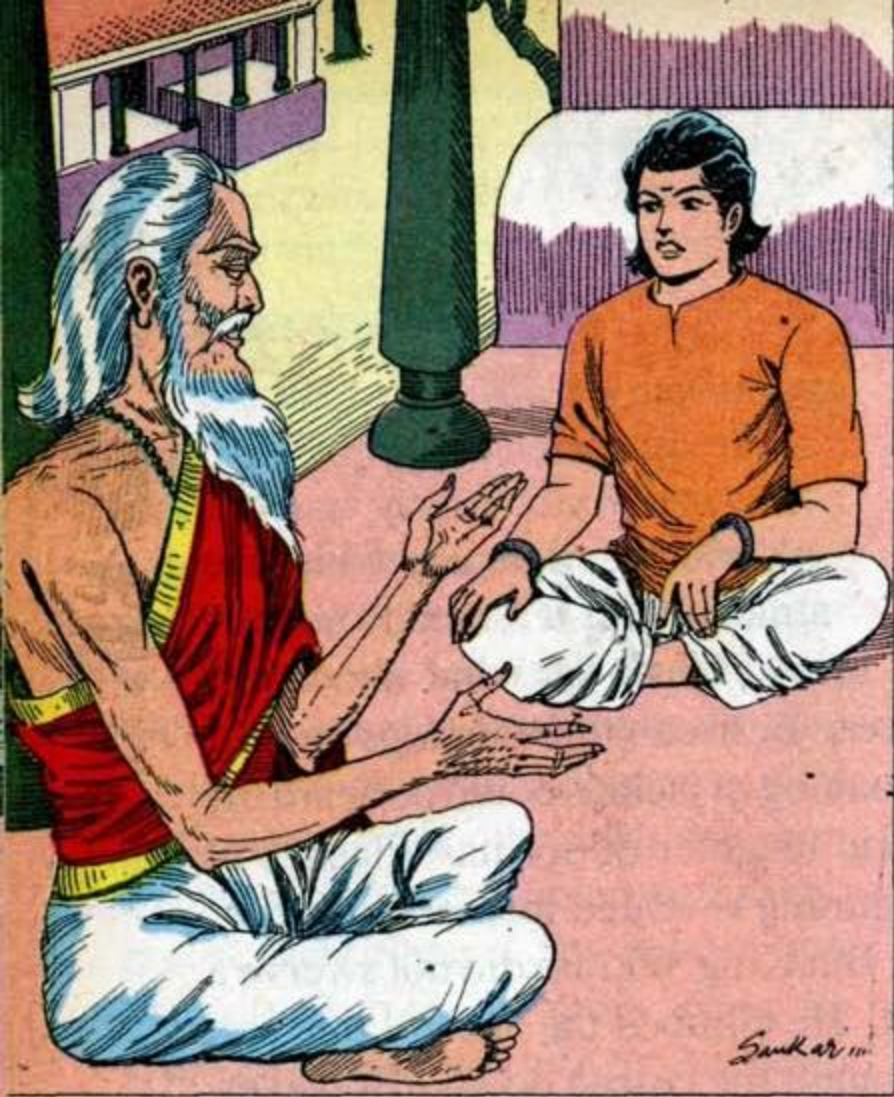
**D**ark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. Gusts of wind shook the trees. Between thunderclaps and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning revealed fearsome faces.

But King Vikram did not swerve a bit. He climbed the ancient tree and brought the corpse down. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse spoke: "O King, normally you should be enjoying a good sleep at this hour of the night. Instead of doing that, what makes you go through this strange rite? Aren't you afraid? Are you trying to acquire some mysterious powers to rout your rivals? Or are you aiming at a paradise of peace where you won't have to bother for anything? How are you certain that you will achieve either of these? You might fail in both. That was what happened to Gopal Sharma. Listen to his story carefully and you may succeed in avoiding similar pitfalls." The vampire then began his narration.

Gopal Sharma was a young inhab-







itant of Gopagram village. He was born into a family of musicians. His father was an expert on the veena. And his grandfather was an exponent of classical music. As a teacher, he had several disciples learning from him. Even when he was a little child, Gopal lost both his parents. Fortunately, they had left behind them a host of musical instruments and treatises on music. He made good use of them and became an expert singer.

Gopagram was part of the kingdom of Rajgiri, which at that time had no court musician. The king was looking for a capable person to adorn that post. The test he prescribed was for anyone to sing a song in a rare *raga*, and if he were to succeed, then the

post of court musician would undoubtedly go to him.

When he heard the king's announcement, Gopal Sharma was happy. Here was a chance to exhibit his talents at the royal durbar. He started for the capital one morning. By afternoon, he was tired and wished to take rest for sometime. He came upon a house on the way, where he was not only given food but offered shelter for as long as he wanted. The house owner Pasupati was in his eighties. There was only one more inmate—his grand-daughter of marriageable age.

Pasupati was curious to know about the antecedents of his young visitor. Gopal Sharma introduced himself. "So you're a musician?" said the old man, in surprise. "I, too, have some knowledge of music. Please sing a song, let me listen to you."

Gopal Sharma sang a song. Pasupati enjoyed it very much and praised Gopal's talents. "That raga cannot be described as anything rare. I know of a raga which is really unique. It is called Apoorva, and there is a story behind it."

This was the story Pasupati narrated: Long ago he was in a gurukul. One day he was out in the forest collecting fruits and vegetables for the gurukul. Suddenly, he heard someone singing. And it was really divine music. He listened intently and began walking towards where the music





came from. The divine music ultimately led him to an *ashram*. There he saw the sage's daughter stringing a garland of flowers as she sang. She stopped when she saw a stranger near the ashram.

The sudden halt to the singing upset Pasupati very much. Anyway he decided to learn the raga of that divine song. He waited for the *muni* to come out. On seeing him, Pasupati prostrated before him and gave expression to his desire. "Young man! What you heard is Apoorva—a rare raga. Only those who possess divine qualities can sing that raga or even appreciate it. People on earth are not capable of singing it. One of my ancestors, some five generations ago, had gone to Gandhamadana mountains where he did *tapas* for several years. As he sat in meditation, a *gandharva* called Prajnanapala sang a song in that raga. The muni opened his eyes, only to see the gandharva about to enter a pond for his bath. He followed him and said: "What you sang now was such heavenly music that I'll never forget it. What happiness and peace of mind it has brought to me! I'm beholden to you, O! Angel from heaven!"

Strangely, the *gandharva* did not appreciate the remark by the muni. "What you thought of the raga is true," he said, "but let me warn you, if you were to sing it or teach it to anyone, then that very moment, you'll



forget it!" After casting such a curse, the *gandharva* plunged into the pond and never came out.

This was the story which Pasupati narrated to Gopal Sharma. "I learnt the Apoorva raga from my ancestors; but I shall never teach it to another person. You know the nemesis that might result. So, I won't attempt that. But, Gopal, I can tell you one thing. Anyone who sings this raga will certainly ascend the post of court musician, no doubt about it." He then sang just a bit of the raga.

Gopal Sharma was lost in the mellifluous music that came from Pasupati. He had never before heard such music. "Why did you stop in the middle of the song?" he said, full of





sorrow and disappointment. "If you would continue singing, I shall try to remember it; you need not *teach* the raga to me."

"All that is impossible, Gopal," said Pasupati. "As you know, I'm not supposed to sing the raga, nor can I impart it to another. And if you were to learn it from me, I'll forget the raga and the song the very next moment. That's why I'm trying to preserve it carefully like a precious possession. It's a god-given raga. If I lost it, then everything is lost to me. Gopal, you must realise my predicament. There, she is my grand-daughter. How will I manage to give her in marriage, without anything in my possession? Once her marriage takes place, then I'll be a free man and I'll be ready to teach the raga to anyone."

Pasupati's grand-daughter, who was listening to all this conversation, coolly left the room. Gopal Sharma then and there decided that he would somehow manage to learn the unique raga before he left Pasupati's house and proceeded to the capital.

As he rested, he tried to recollect the bit he had heard from Pasupati. He repeated it, not once but several times, and it so happened that Pasupati overheard Gopal's attempt to get the raga right. He was impressed by the young man's intense desire and determination. He called Gopal into his room and also called out to his grand-daughter to bring the *tampura*.

The three sat down and without any hesitation, Pasupati started singing a song. It was composed in Apoorva raga. Gopal forgot himself all the while, and remained chanting the song after Pasupati. The moment he finished singing the song, he looked at Gopal Sharma, as though he was asking him to sing the song. And Gopal sang the song to the best of his ability. Both Pasupati and his grand-daughter looked at him in wonderment and affection. They praised his talents sky-high.

The girl turned to him. "You heard all that my grandfather told you, haven't you?" she said. "He has now shared his most priceless possession with you. Did you realise the message he wished to convey? He was suggesting that you should now be willing to marry me. If you don't like me, I won't insist on your marrying me. But remember, he has shared his precious gift with you. He'll remain the loser."

"If along with divine music," remarked Gopal Sharma, "I also stand to gain an equally heavenly beauty like you, how could I say 'no' to his offer? I've made my desire clear. What I want to know is whether you're willing accept me as your husband. If you will marry me, I don't have to go to the capital to seek the post of court musician. I'll be happy and contented with my two possessions—the rare raga and a beautiful wife."





The girl shyly turned her face away, though she was nodding her head all the while, denoting her willingness to marry him.

The vampire ended his narration there and turned to King Vikramaditya. "Oh, King! Gopal Sharma was already an expert in music, and was keen to compete for the post of court musician. That's why he left home and started for the capital. On the way he met Pasupati and wed his grand-daughter, and decided not to try for that post. Why did he change his mind? He could have gone to the king's court and tried his luck. And in case he won the coveted post, he could have then returned to marry Pasupati's grand-daughter. If you know the answer and still prefer to remain silent and not satisfy me, I don't have to warn you, but your head will be blown to a thousand pieces!"

Vikramaditya, however, had a ready answer. "It's true, Gopal Sharma was an expert. He had inher-

ited his talents from his ancestors. And they were all well-known exponents of music. But none of them held any posts - like that of a court musician. They depended on other sources for their income, and they didn't have any problem. A true artiste however, will never be satisfied; he would always want to learn more, acquire more knowledge, and become a master. For Gopal Sharma, the moment he learnt the Apoorva raga, he was fully satisfied. He did not wish to aspire for anything more. Not only that. He was also happy that he got a beautiful girl as his wife. What more did he wish to have in life? That's why he decided not to proceed to the capital and compete for the post of court musician. He took the right decision."

The vampire realised that he had been outwitted once again. He flew back to the ancient tree, carrying the corpse with him. And the king drew his sword and went after the vampire.





# The Conscientious Burglar

One night a thief broke into a house. He saw a young man soundly asleep on the floor. Silently, he spread out the scarf that he had brought to carry the stolen goods and then went about to ransack the place.

Meanwhile, the youth who was actually awake, quietly rolled onto the spread-out scarf and pretended to snore.

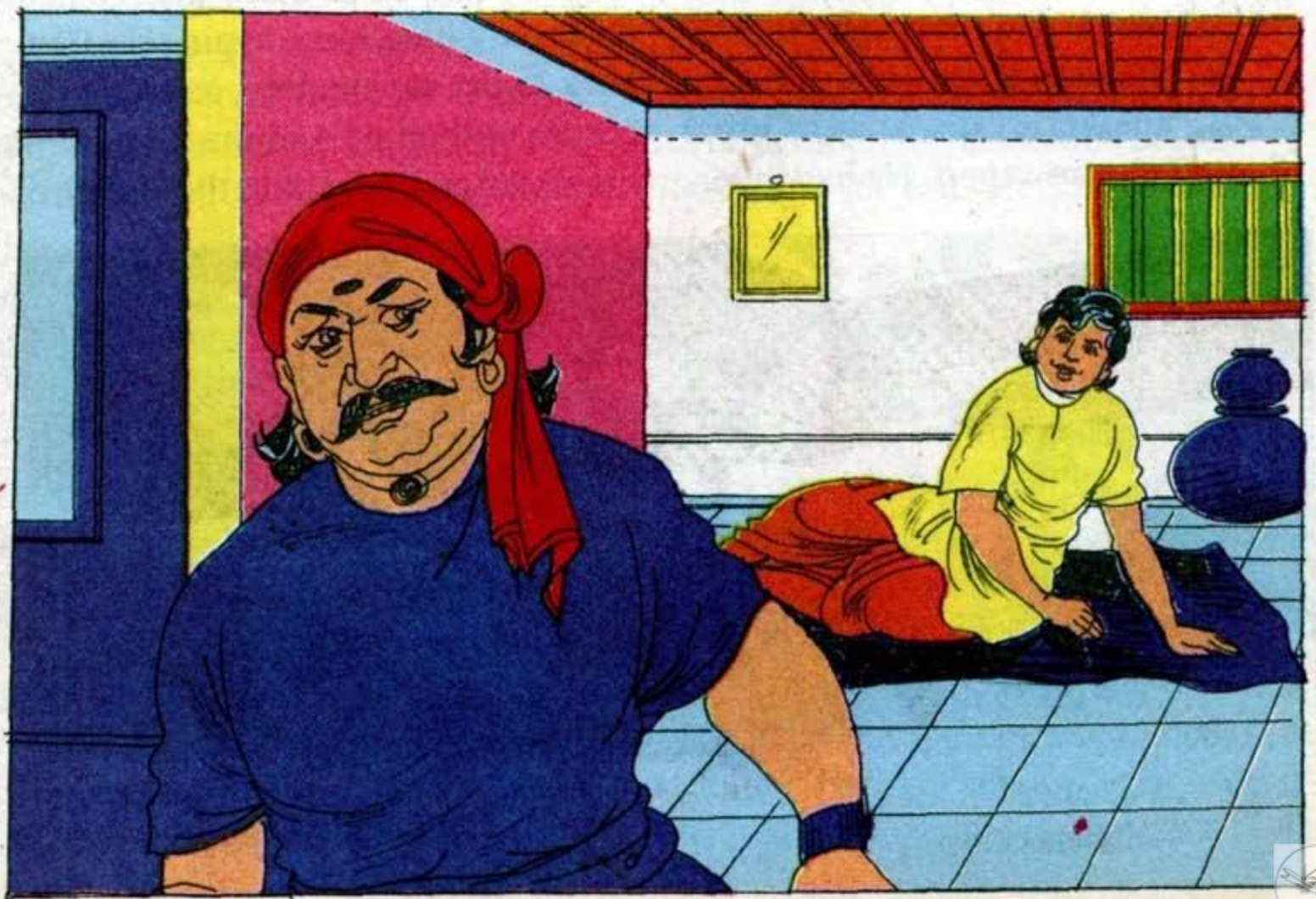
Now the thief returned in vain without finding anything worth stealing. He saw the young muscular youth blissfully sleeping on his scarf.

"It's wiser to leave behind my belonging than encounter this wrestler!" said the lean fellow to himself and made for the door.

As he was just going out, the young man said, "Good evening, Mr. Thief! Please, if you don't mind, shut the door properly behind you, so that no one else may enter!"

"Don't be unwise," replied the thief, though in a tone of despair, "let me leave the door open, for someone may also care to bring you a blanket in the same way as I brought you a nice bed-sheet! Goodbye!"

(A.K.D.)





## Back To The Mainland

Text : Meera Nair ♦ Artworks : Gopakumar

Leaving the enchanting coral islands of Lakshadweep, we return to the mainland, to the coastal town of Padmanabhapuram which is about 55 km south of Thiruvananthapuram.

Although Padmanabhapuram is now a part of Tamil Nadu, it used to be the ancient capital of the Travancore maharajas from the 16th to the 18th centuries.

The Padmanabhapuram palace, where the maharajas of Travancore lived till the early half of this century is situated at the centre of the Padmanabhapuram fort. It is regarded as one of the finest specimens of wooden architecture on the west coast.

The walls of the palace were built at an angle to block out solar glare and heat. The floors that shine like polished mirrors are made from a unique blend of coconut shells and egg white. The cot in the king's bedroom is made of 63

varieties of medicinal wood, believed to have been presented by Portuguese visitors. The queen's bed is inlaid with ivory.

A huge stone ball that lies loosely atop a stone pillar of the palace was used in the olden days to test the strength of persons seeking recruitment into the army. Only those who could lift the stone ball were selected.



Entrance to  
Padmanabhapuram Palace





**Goddess Kanya Kumari**

which when tapped, produce musical notes. Some rods produce the sound of the *Jalataranga*, some, that of the *tambura*, others, the *mridangam* (drum) and still others, the *veena*.

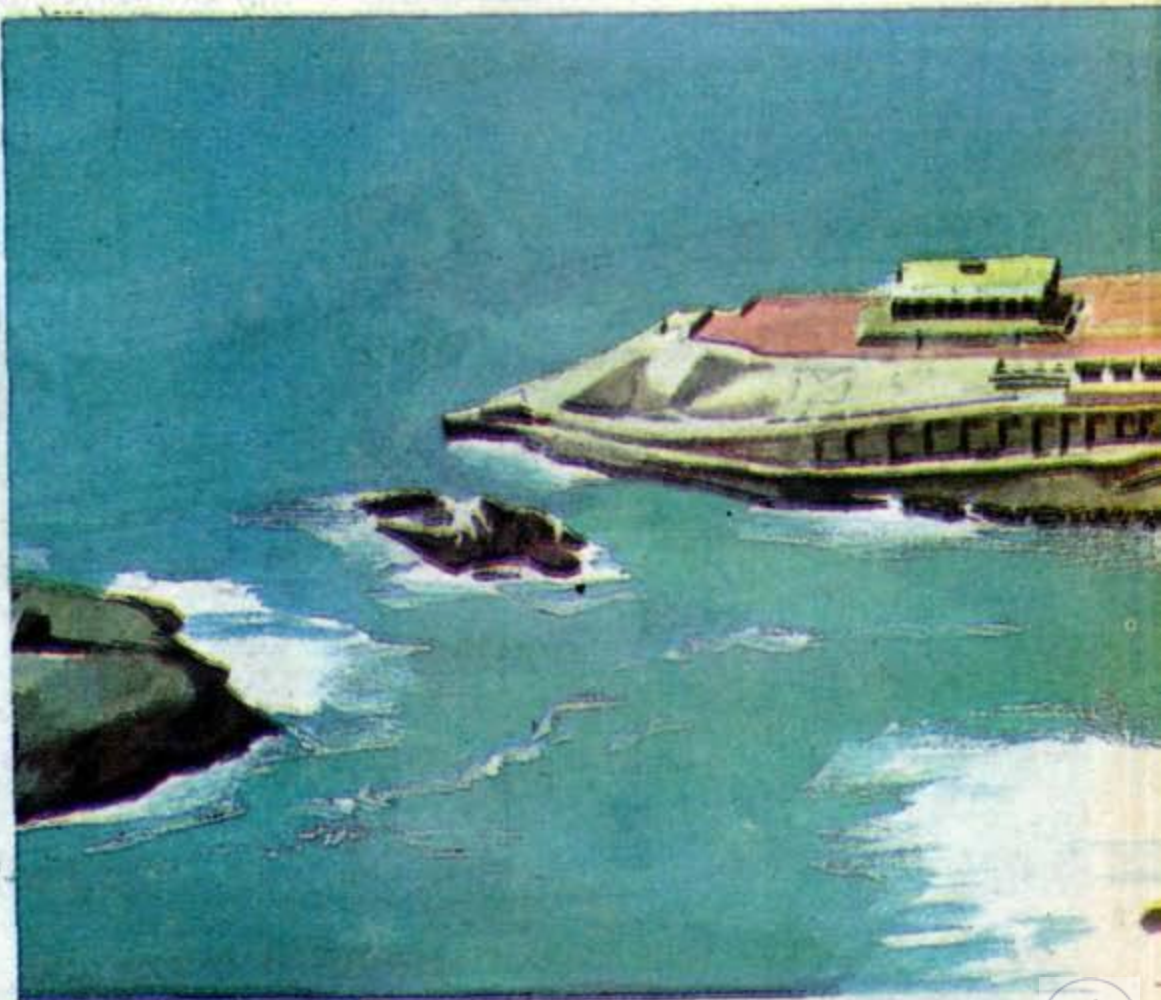
At the southernmost tip of the country, where the waters of the Arabian Sea, the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean mingle, stands the celebrated temple of

Sixteen kilometres south of Padmanabhapuram is the Suchindram temple, famous for the thirty shrines within it. Lord Indra is said to have dipped his hand in boiling ghee to atone for his sins, here at Suchindram. Until a few decades ago a person suspected of a crime had to go through the 'boiling ghee' ordeal in the temple grounds. The person had to undergo a fast and then plunge his hand into a vessel containing boiling ghee. If there were no blisters on his hand three days later, he was declared innocent.

The hollow trunk of a 2,500-year-old tree faces the 41 m high 'gopuram'. The hollow contains images of the holy trinity — Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara — in the form of lingams.

A gigantic statue of Hanuman stands within the temple precincts. Ganges water mixed with rose water is poured over the statue's head and the water collected at the feet is given as 'tirtha' to devotees.

In the temple's northern corridor are four musical pillars hewed out of a single block of granite. The pillars consist of cylindrical rods





Kanya Kumari, the Virgin Goddess.

Legend has it that the deity at the Suchindram temple fell in love with the beautiful goddess and told the *devas* of his intention to marry her. The *devas*, fearing that the goddess would lose her powers if she got married, sought Narada's help to prevent the marriage.

Narada told the bridegroom that the auspicious hour for the marriage was just before dawn. He then turned himself into a cock and crowed loudly before the marriage party could reach its destination. The bridegroom thinking that dawn had broken, returned sadly to Suchindram.

The goddess was furious when the god did not show up and threw the food prepared for the feast outside where it got miraculously transformed into sea-shells and sands of myriad hues.

The sands at Kanya Kumari are red, brown, yellow, silver, orange, dark blue and purple. They contain monozite. Uranium, valuable for generating atomic energy, is extracted from these sands.

One of the famous landmarks of Kanya Kumari is the 'Gandhi Mandapam' built at the spot where Mahatma Gandhi's ashes were once kept.

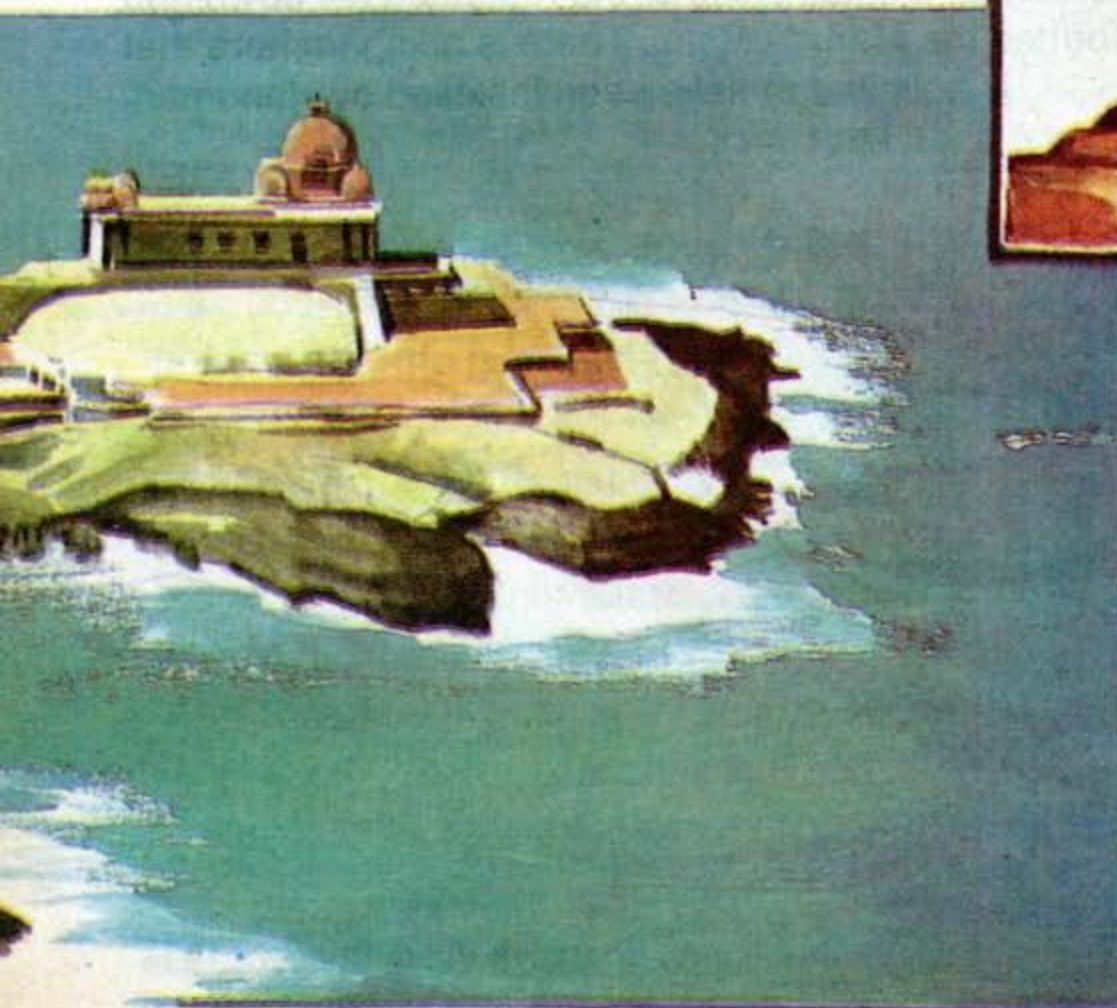
The *mandapam* consists of a simple chamber. A black marble slab indicates the exact spot where Gandhiji's ashes were placed before immersion.

Directly above this slab on the ceiling is a small hole. Every year on October 2 on Gandhi's birthday, sunlight enters through this minute



hole and casts a long beam on the slab. Hundreds of people gather on this day to watch this moving sight.

Half a kilometre into the sea stands a rock where the Goddess Kanya Kumari is said to have prayed to



**Vivekananda Rock Memorial**





Gandhi Mandapam

Lord Shiva. It is also the place where the great philosopher and social reformer, Swami Vivekananda, meditated three days and nights in December 1892.

In 1970, the Vivekananda Kendra inaugurated the Vivekananda Rock Memorial at this spot.

Adjacent to the Vivekananda Rock Memorial stands another rock, where a

3 m tall statue of the poet-saint Tiruvalluvar is in the process of being erected. Tiruvalluvar is regarded as the author of 'Tirukkural', the 'Tamil Veda'.

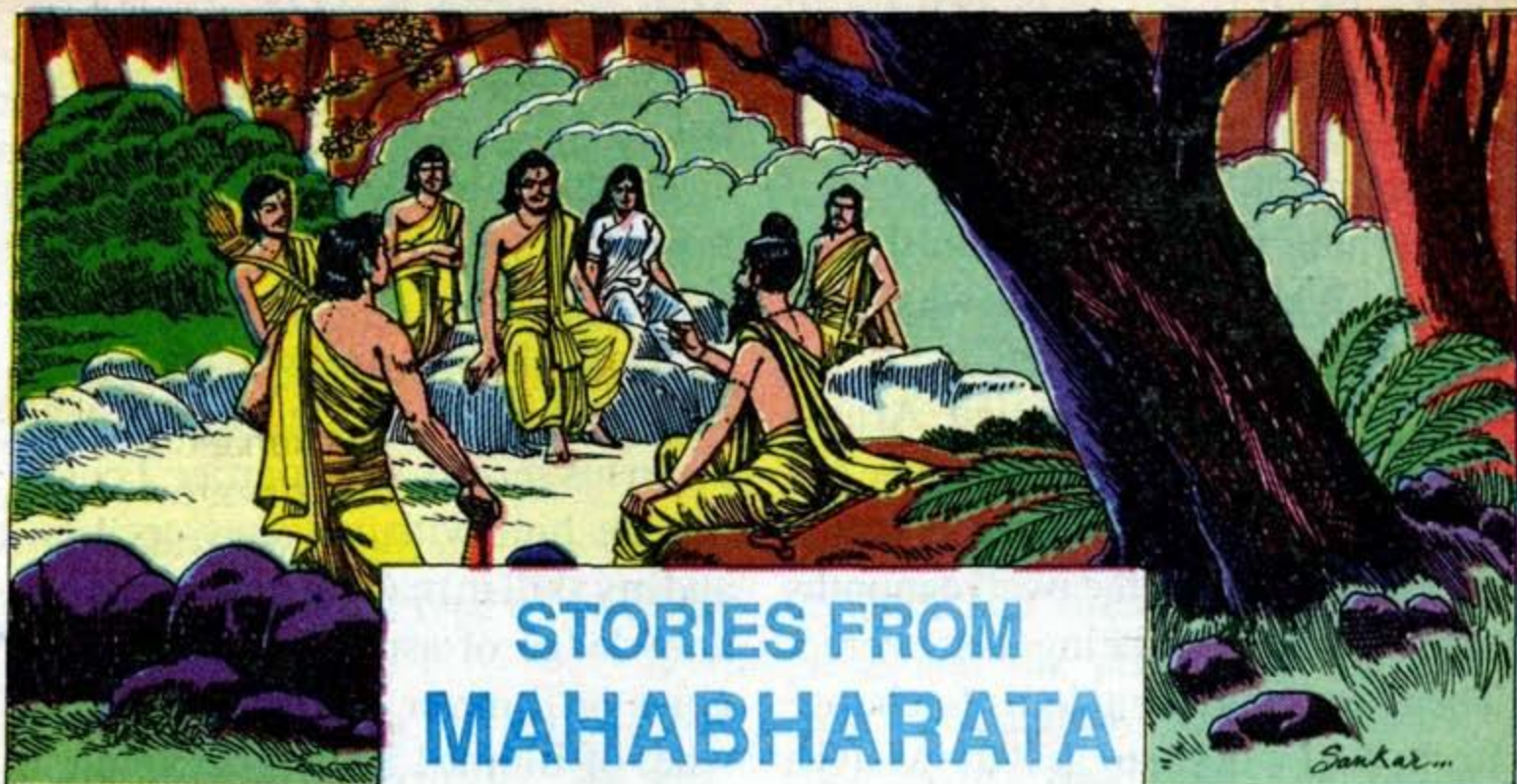
Not far from Kanya Kumari is Maruda Malai, a hill where medicinal herbs grow in abundance. These herbs are used in the preparation of Ayurvedic medicines.

The story goes that when Lakshmana was hit by a poisonous arrow while fighting Ravana, Rama asked Hanuman to fetch the medicinal herb, *Sanjivini*, from a mountain in the Himalayas. The *Sanjivini* was an antidote to all poisons.

Unable to locate the *Sanjivini*, Hanuman uprooted the entire mountain and as he was carrying it to Lanka, a small piece of the mountain fell down and formed the Maruda Malai. There is a lingam here that is believed to have been installed by Hanuman.







### The story so far:

*Yudhishtira, the eldest son of King Pandu, was inveigled into a fraudulent game of dice, and in his rashness he lost all his worldly possessions. He and his brothers, accompanied by their queen, Draupadi, had to undergo twelve years of exile, followed by a year during which they must remain in total hiding.*

*The twelve years of exile had now ended, and the Pandava princes resolved that once the year of hiding ended, they would claim their rightful kingdom, even if it would mean going to war against their cousins, the Kauravas.*

*The old Kuru monarch, Dhritarashtra, sightless and feeble, longed for peace with the Pandavas. But the unyielding Duryodhana, backed by the arrogant Karna, was determined to destroy the Pandavas. Their noble grandsire, Bhishma, viewed the future with foreboding, but among Duryodhana's formidable allies was the venerable priest and warrior Drona.*

*At the hermitage in the forest, the Pandava princes and some sages sat silently, each thinking of the past and wondering what the future held in store for them.*

**Y**udhishtira slowly stood up and, addressing the sages, said: "O noble ones, the time has come for us to part. As you know, we were deceived by the sons of Dhritarashtra, and cheated out of our kingdom. We've managed to live through these twelve years of exile, and now we have to spend a year in hiding, ever afraid of being discovered by Duryodhana's spies. Before you de-

part, bless us and wish us well until the day dawns when we can meet again in our normal surroundings."

Dhaumya, the priest, then spoke: "Parting is always painful, and the dangers facing you are many, but you have proved yourselves to be wise and undaunted. A year will soon pass, then, like the great gods of the past, you'll conquer your enemies and win prosperity.

## 25. THE CRUCIAL LAST YEAR



The Pandavas took leave of the sages. The five princes and Draupadi went deeper into the forest, to discuss how they should spend this year of concealment.

Turning to Arjuna, Yudhishtira asked: "Where do you think we should spend the thirteenth year?"

"O great king," replied Arjuna breaking into a smile, "remember, the Lord of Dharma has blessed us so that we can easily pass the twelve months together without being discovered. There are many kingdoms to choose from, but I would suggest the Matsya country of King Virata. That would be the best."

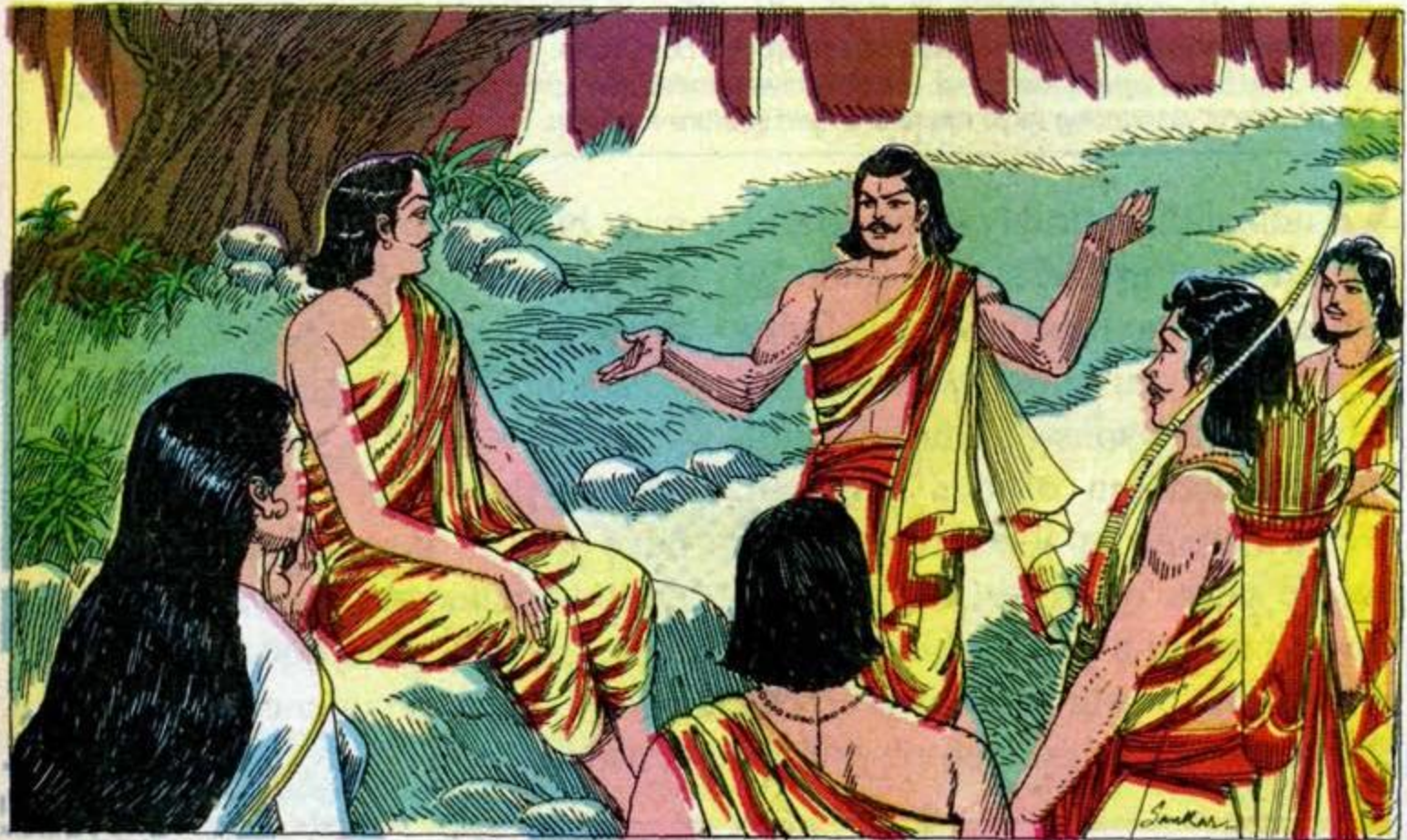
"Well spoken, brother," said Yudhishtira. "King Virata has always been a firm friend, and he's a man devoted to virtue, and would certainly not be frightened of

Duryodhana. So, let's agree on Matsya, and we should have no difficulty in finding work at the king's palace."

Arjuna looked baffled. "Tell me, brother, what type of work would you seek?"

Yudhishtira quickly answered. "I'm thinking of asking Virata to take me in his service as a courtier. I could delight him with my conversation, and my skill in reading omens and my knowledge of astrology. In my disguise he'll never recognise me. But what of Bhima? How is he going to hide his mighty figure?"

Bhima burst out laughing. "O king, I think I shall take service as a cook. You all know I've a great appetite and can prepare dainty dishes to tempt any king. Besides, I could also delight the king by taking on any wres-





tlers that come to his court.

"Good," Yudhishtira said approvingly. "Now, what about you, Arjuna?"

Arjuna hesitated for a moment. "I think I shall offer my services as a dancing master and a music teacher for the womenfolk of the palace."

Yudhishtira then turned to Nakula and asked him what type of work he had in mind.

"I shall look after the horses," replied Nakula cheerfully. "As you know, I'm good at training horses and I understand their ailments. I'll say that I tended the horses of the Pandavas and I've no doubt Virata will take me in his service."

Sahadeva, the twin brother of Nakula, did not wait to be asked what work he had in mind. With a broad grin, he announced, "Let Nakula look

after horses. I shall tend the cows. Virata's cattle will be well protected from the ravages of diseases and the attacks by wild animals."

When Yudhishtira looked at Draupadi, she sensed his embarrassment and with a twinkle in her eyes, said, "Don't worry on my account. I shall be a maid in the court of the queen. I can dress the hair of the queen and the princesses and also keep them amused with anecdotes." Then, as an after-thought, she added, "I shall say I had served Princess Draupadi, and I'm sure no one will recognise me."

Having decided on the roles they were to adopt, the princes chose suitable garbs from the clothes they had carefully stored through the years, for this year of concealment.

Yudhishtira disguised himself as





an ascetic. Arjuna transformed himself into a dancing master, and his feminine looks brought peals of merriment from the others. Bhima looked every inch a well-fed, contented cook, and Draupadi was the perfect demure handmaid. Yet, it was difficult to disguise their natural princely charm and bearing.

When they were ready to leave on their journey to Matsya, Arjuna gave a cry of horror. "Our weapons!" he cried. "I can't leave my Gandiva bow behind!"

"Don't worry," Yudhishtira chided. "Before we reach Matsya, we'll wrap our weapons in our old clothes and hide them well out of sight in the topmost branches of a big tree."

When they eventually reached the court of King Virata, the monarch looked at them with surprise, for they seemed to him born to command

rather than to seek employment. At first he hesitated, but after listening to their eloquent pleas, gave them the posts they desired.

Yudhishtira adopted the name Kanka, and became the king's constant companion. Bhima worked as the chief of the cooks, and demonstrated before the court his skill in wrestling, defeating whoever dared to challenge him. Arjuna assumed the name of Brihannala, and taught dancing and singing to Princess Uttara, the daughter of King Virata. Nakula was happy looking after the horses, while Sahadeva watched over the cattle.

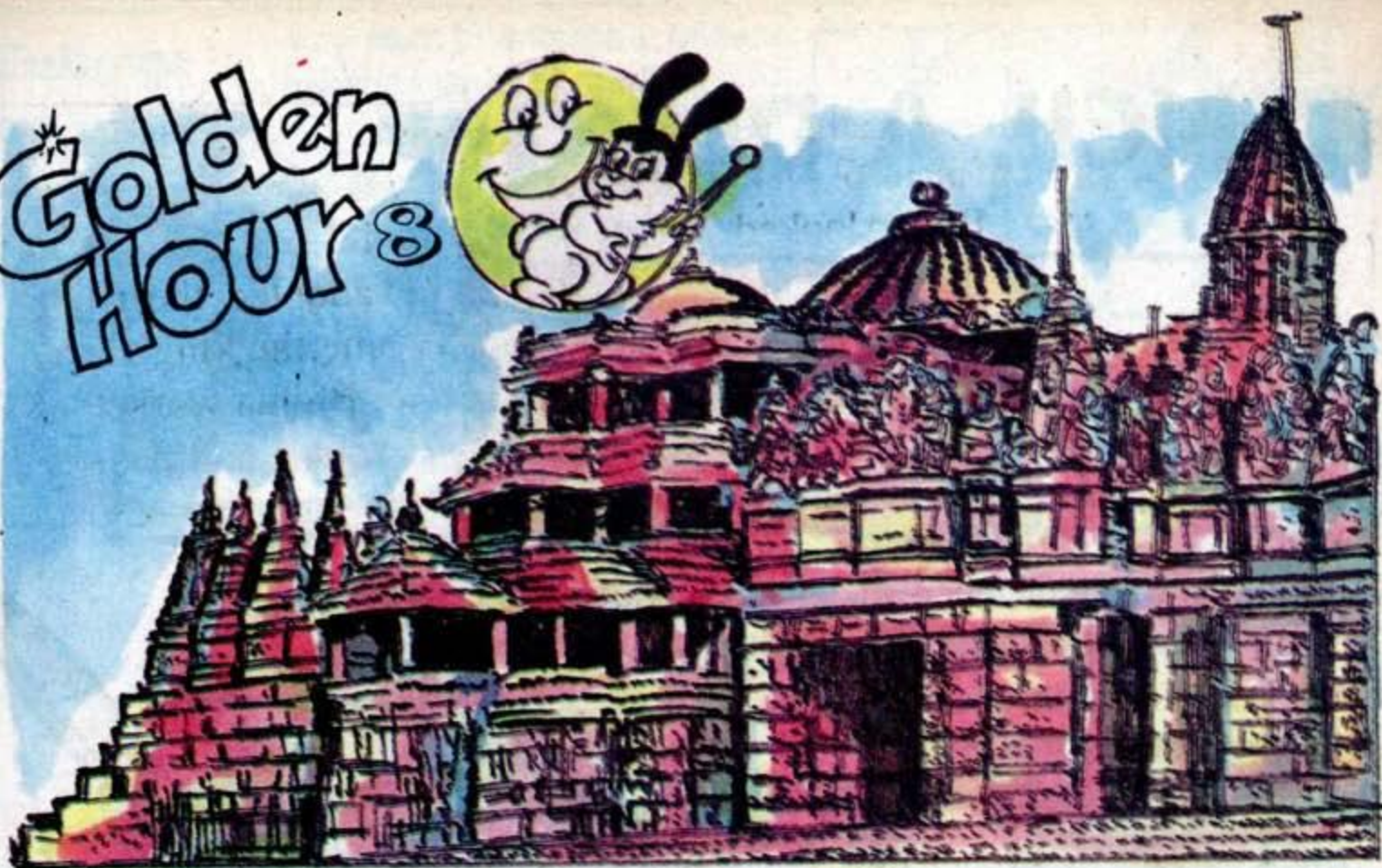
The fair Draupadi who, if fate had been less cruel, should have been served by a retinue of servants, had now to pass her days serving Sudeshna, the queen of King Virata.

— To continue





# Golden Hour 8



2

This holy abode of Shiva is situated amid snow and ice, at the height of nearly 13,000 ft. above sea level. The *linga*, the symbol of Shiva is formed by icicles. It grows in size with the waxing of the moon and decreases in size with the waning of the moon. Where is this temple?

- 1 This is one of the finest Jain temples of Rajasthan, built in 1439. It has 29 halls supported by 1444 pillars. But in this vast maze of pillars, no two pillars are alike.

Can you name the temple and the place where it is built?



3

On the left is the script used by the people of the Indus Valley Civilisation. It has not yet been deciphered. On the right is a script that bears a strong resemblance to the Indus Valley script. Who used this script?





# STENCIL. A DESIGN



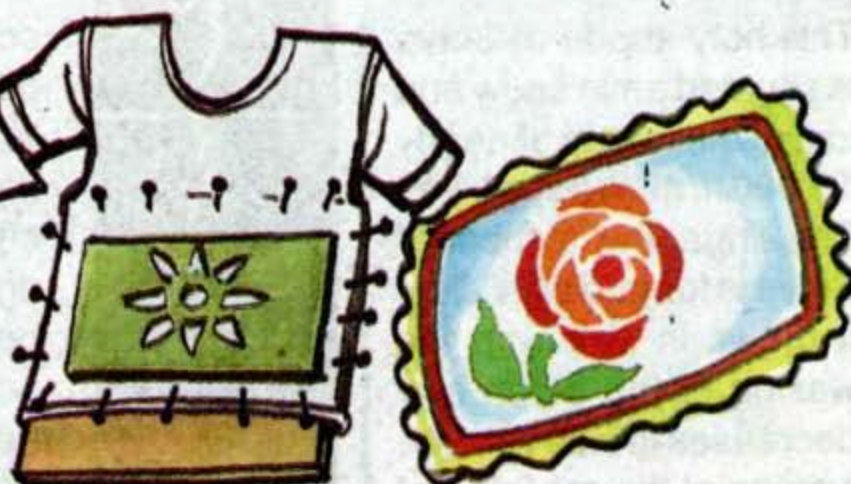
Learn how to print your own design on paper, fabric, T-shirts and cushion covers. It is simple!



1. Take a thick paper or plastic sheet. Trace on it a shape or design you wish to stencil. Use bold, simple shapes.
2. Cut out the shapes from the paper and your stencil is ready.
3. Make a thick mixture of colour. Keep the cut out paper on a white or coloured drawing paper. Hold the stencil firmly and fill the shape with paint. You can use a thick brush or cotton wool for this.



4. Repeat the design to form a pattern.



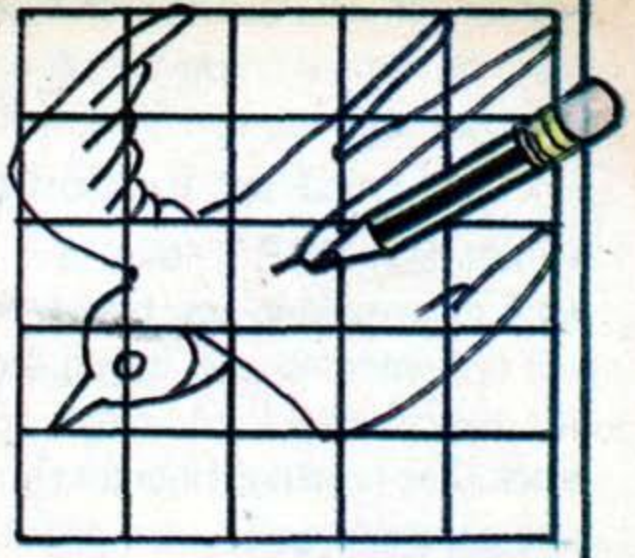
5. To stencil on cloth and jersey material use fabric paint. Remember to keep the fabric flat. You may do this by pinning it on a piece of cardboard.



## Enlarge a Picture

You want to enlarge a picture.  
Here is how you can do it.

1. Take a ruler and a pencil. Draw a grid of 1 cm squares on the picture you want to enlarge.
2. On a drawing paper draw the same number of bigger squares of 2 cms.
3. Now carefully copy the lines in each square.



## Cut Out a Penguin

1. On a stiff card paper trace out or enlarge the figure on the left using the technique given above.
2. Cut out the figure. Cut along the red lines.
3. Fold along the dotted lines. Push in at the throat. Spread out the wings. Pull out the legs. Now you have a cut out penguin ready.





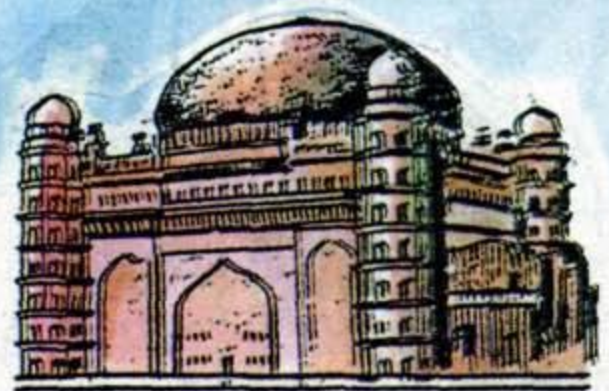
## Draw a Camel in Three Easy Steps...



### Golden Hour - No. 7

#### Answers:

1. The tomb, Gol Gumbaj, is the mausoleum of Mohammed Adil Shah, seventh Sultan of Bijapur's Adil Shahi Dynasty. It is the second largest dome in the world.
2. Jatinga, Assam.
3. This house of worship belongs to the people of the Baha'i faith, a religion founded by the Persian mystic Baha'ullah in the 19th century.



4. The dinosaur, transformed into an elephant.

#### Jumbled Comics:

The correct order is: 1, 8, 4, 5, 6, 2, 10, 7, 9 and 3.



# SPORTS SNIPPETS

## Century of one-dayers

When India played Australia in Bangalore on October 21, and won the match in a nail-biting finish, not many knew that it was the 100th one-dayer to be played during the calendar year of 1996. It was a new record! The earlier record was 97 matches in 1994. In a way, one-day matches "celebrate" their Silver Jubilee, for, it was in 1971 that such limited over games were thought of and the first match played in Melbourne between Australia and England. This year, 17 one-dayers were played in India, 16 in Pakistan, 10 in Australia, 9 in Sri Lanka, 7 each in South Africa, Kenya, and the U.A.E., 6 each in England and W.Indies, 5 in Canada, 4 in Singapore, and 3 in New Zealand.

## Record number of appearances

When former Indian Captain, Mohammad Azharuddin, played against South Africa, in Hyderabad on October 17, he was playing in his 226th one-dayer, erasing the record of Kapil Dev's 225.



Azharuddin already holds another record in one-day International matches—a total of 6,000 runs, which he reached in Toronto, Canada, where India played

Pakistan in the Sahara Cup, on September 18. He is the seventh batsman to cross the 6,000 mark in one-day internationals.

## Indian honour for Lara

The first ever CEAT International Cricketer Award was conferred on Brian Lara. The award was presented to that cricketing legend from West Indies at a function in Mumbai (Bombay) on October 1. The award has



been instituted for the outstanding cricketer for a specific period—May 1, 1995 to April 30, 1996. The jury included India's Sunil Gavaskar, Clive

Lloyd of W.Indies, and Ian Chappell of England—all of them top class players in their own times. The award consisted of a trophy and a cash prize of Rs.5 lakhs. Accepting the award, the 'Prince of Port-of-Spain' said: "It's a great honour to receive the award here in India which is the home of cricket. It's a great moment in my life".

## Olympic predictions

The next Olympic Games to be held in 2000 A.D. in Sydney, Australia, may very well have a participation of more than 10,500 competitors, which will then be an all-time record. The organisers, who would like to maintain a ceiling of 10,000 players, are however gearing themselves up to receive a larger number of sportsmen and women. Two sports events have been added to the disciplines — taekwondo and triathlon.



## THREE SPLENDID GUESSES



One day the Sultan, in disguise, was strolling down the forest path with a companion, named Hussain. Some distance ahead of them walked another man.

"Hussain!" called the Sultan turning to his friend. "Can you tell me who that man walking in front of us could be?"

"I think he is a carpenter," replied the other, after intently observing the stranger.

"By any chance, do you know his name?"

"Perhaps he too is called Hussain."

"Then you surely know him! Now you're fooling me, eh!" exclaimed the

Sultan.

"No, Your Highness, I'm seeing him for the first time," replied his companion.

"Then what led you to presume that he is called Hussain?" asked the ruler, rather perplexed.

"When you called my name, I saw him turn his head as if in reply. From that I concluded that his name might be the same as mine."

"That sounds logical! But how do you so confidently state that he is a carpenter?" asked a bewildered Sultan.

"As he walks, I have been marking that he pays no heed to the trees laden with juicy fruit, nor do the sweet-



scented flowers bordering the pathway charm him. Only large towering trees that can be used as timber engage his attention. That leads me to assume that his profession is carpentry," he replied.

"This is indeed great! You seem to be a genius! But if you can tell me what he has eaten not a long while ago, I will form a much higher opinion of your unusual talents and powers of observation," said the Sultan with a smile.

"A little while ago, I guess, he has relished either honey or some sweetmeat," replied the Sultan's companions keenly noticing the gestures of the man.

The Sultan then called the stranger and asked, "Do you know this gentleman beside me?"

"No! I've never seen him before," he replied rather surprised.

"Now, if you don't mind, dear friend, may I put to you three more questions?"

"You're welcome to do so."

"Firstly, what is your name? Secondly, what is your vocation? Lastly, what did you eat a little while ago?"

"Hussain is my name. I am a carpenter. An hour ago I relished pure honey," replied the stranger, perplexed at these unusual enquiries.

"Thank you very much. Here's a pouch of gold for your answers," said the Sultan and bade the man goodbye.

Then turning to his companion, he asked in an astonished tone, "Tell me, good Hussain, how on earth did you infer that he had eaten honey?"

"I observed that he was incessantly smacking his lips and driving away a fly that incessantly bothered him hovering about his mouth. That led me to assume that he had perhaps eaten something sweet. It could be honey because that is available in plenty here," answered Hussain plainly.

"Bravo! You've indeed a fantastic brain!" exclaimed the Sultan embracing his friend.





## **Sacred for Shiva Worship**

One of India's most sacred trees is *Bilva* or *Bael*. Its tender, undamaged, and typical threesome leaf (see diagram) is an indispensable item used for worshipping Lord Shiva. It is commonly grown in temple compounds as well as large gardens. Equally sacred is its fruit which is considered symbolic of prosperity and fertility and is, therefore, described as a *shriphala*. The name *Bael* is common in Hindi, Bengali, and Marathi; it is called *Bili* in Gujarathi, *Vilvam* in Tamil and Malayalam, and *Muredu* in Telugu.

An evergreen tree, the Bael is middle-sized, growing up to 10 metres high. The rough greying bark is thorny. The branches have knots all along and grow rather crookedly. The leaves are smooth and lance-shaped. They fall down in winter, but sprout forth in attractive abundance in spring. The greenish-white flowers are sweet-smelling. They appear normally in April-May. The fruit is greyish-yellow, spherical in shape, and with a hard shell. The pulp inside is edible and makes a refreshing drink in summer. A *sherbet* is prepared, mixing the dried pulp with sugar and cream or

curd.

The fruit, leaves, bark, and roots of Bael all have medicinal properties. The tree is cultivated throughout India in the plains. The plant belongs to the family of Rutaceae, to which oranges and lemons also belong.





## Sages of India

# Astika

The son of Sage Jaratkaru and Manasadevi, Astika was taught by the great sage Chyavana. Manasadevi was the daughter of Sage Kasyapa. She had great power over serpents.

Once the serpents of the earth faced a great crisis. It happened like this: King Parikshit, the grandson of Arjuna, while in the forest, playfully threw a dead serpent around the neck of a sage named Samika who sat in meditation and, therefore, did not respond to his query. This act, unworthy of a king, was observed by Samika's son, Sringeri, who cursed the king, saying he would die of snake-bite within seven days.

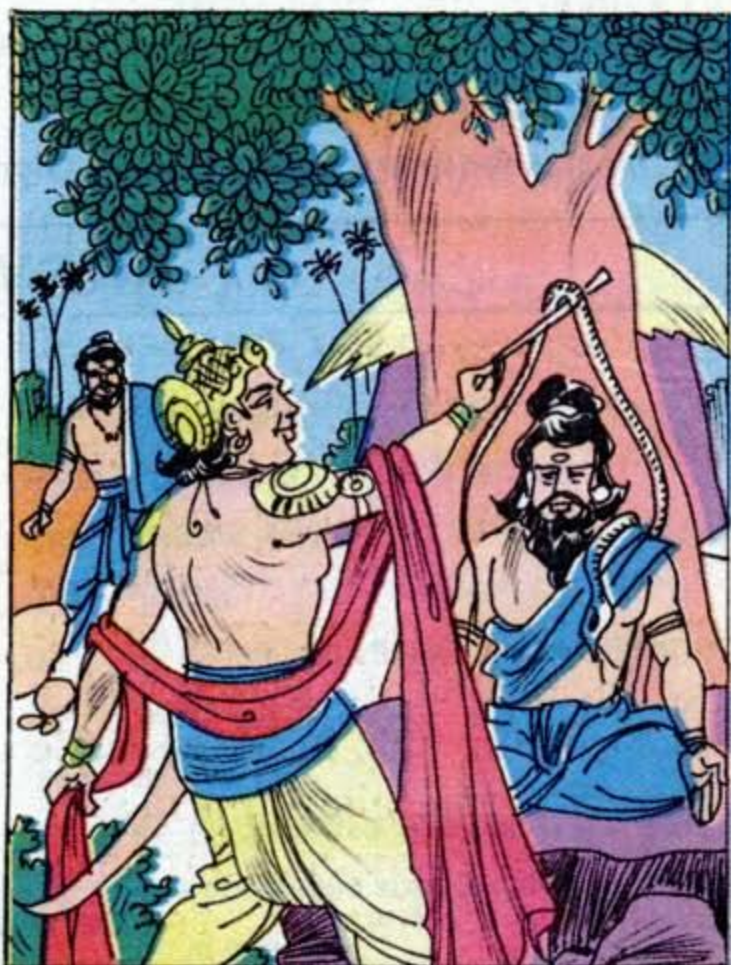
Coming to learn of the curse, the king took every step possible to safeguard himself. He remained inside a secluded palace on an island, guarded by vigilant soldiers and well-wishers and exorcists. But Takshaka, one of the serpent-chiefs, reduced himself to the size of a tiny worm and hid in a fruit. When the king began eating the fruit, he emerged to his full size and bit the king to death. Parikshit's son, Prince Janamejaya, became furious. He decided to destroy the entire race of serpents. He organised a Yajna, a very special fire-rite, with the help of expert sages and Brahmins. Their chanting of powerful hymns began

pulling out the serpents from every forest, hill, and hamlet and thousands of them were consumed by the fire.

At last, Takshaka himself was pulled out by the invisible force sent by the Yajna. He ran and coiled around one of the legs of the throne of Indra. The mighty power of the hymns was able to pull the throne also along with Indra and Takshaka.

Several gods who saw this ran to Manasadevi. She asked her son, Astika, to intervene. Astika met Prince Janamejaya and persuaded him to stop the terrible rite. Impressed by the young sage, the prince yielded to his request. Thus, Takshaka and the remaining serpents were saved.

It is believed that those who revere Astika will be free from the fear of snakes.





# DO YOU KNOW?

1. Who wrote India's national song?
2. Which is the smallest independent state in the world?
3. How many planets revolve round the sun?
4. Which channel separates England from Europe?
5. What is the national flower of India?
6. Who invented the famous characters, Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck?
7. A tax is imposed on goods brought from another country. What is it called?
8. What is the name of the currency of the U.S.A.?
9. What is the imaginary line, where the sky and land appear to meet, called?
10. Who is considered as the founder of the nursing profession?
11. What are bricks made of?
12. Which are the two houses of India's Parliament?
13. How many squares does the chess board have?
14. Which Vitamin is derived from sunlight?
15. Which country is the largest producer of gold?
16. Under what situation is a white flag used?
17. Which is the biggest planet in the solar system?
18. Who is referred to as the 'nightingale of India'?
19. Which is the tallest among animals?
20. What is the time gap between one Olympic Games and the next one?

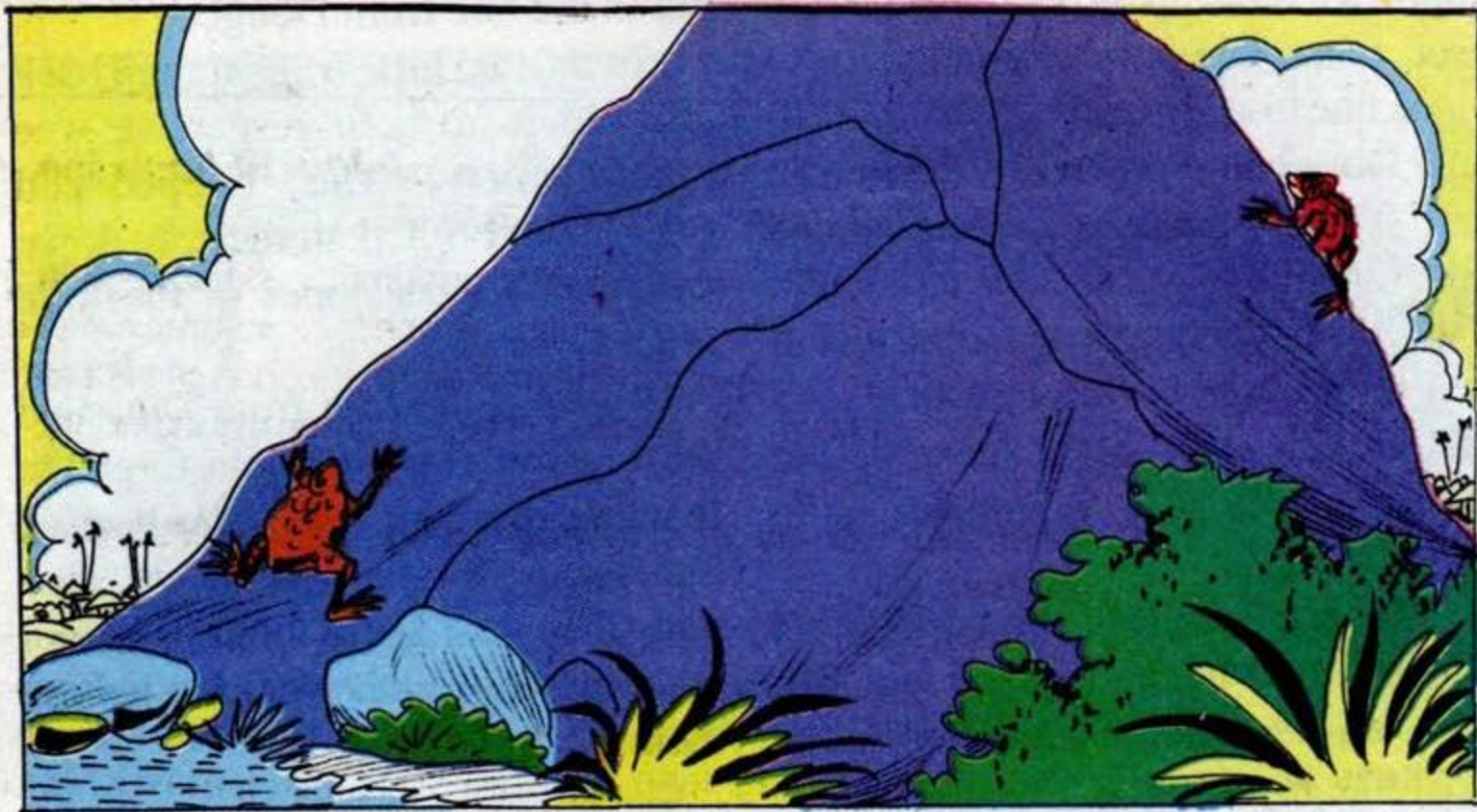
## ANSWERS

- |                                        |                              |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 11. Sand and clay                      | 10. Florence Nightingale     |
| 12. The Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha  | 9. The horizon               |
| 13. 64-32 black and 32 white           | 8. The dollar                |
| 14. Vitamin D                          | 7. Customs Duty              |
| 15. South Africa                       | 6. Walt Disney               |
| 16. To announce or seek truce or peace | 5. The lotus                 |
| 17. Jupiter                            | 4. The English Channel       |
| 18. Sarojini Naidu                     | 3. Nine, including the Earth |
| 19. The giraffe                        | 2. The Vatican, in Rome      |
| 20. Four years.                        | 1. 'And Math'                |





# The Two Jolly Travellers



In days of old, when the world was young, there lived two little frogs in two wee little hamlets called Ding and Dong respectively. Between them lay a green little hillock.

From travellers passing by their bushes, the Dingian frog heard about Dong and the Dongian heard about Ding.

Now it so happened that the frog that lived in village Ding, one day thought how life might be in Dong. At the same time the frog from Dong told himself, "Life would perhaps be fun in Ding!"

So well before the cock's crow the following morning, both set out on their sweet mission. One started from

the eastern foothill of the little mountain and the other from the western end.

*Hoppetty skip, skippetty hop  
I am off to visit the town yonder.  
Hoppetty skip, skippetty hop  
It's sure to be jolly and full of wonder!*

They sang as they hopped and skipped their way up the hill. It was not before long that they reached the summit and met each other.

"Where are you going, brother?" asked the frog from Ding.

"I'm off to seek greater happiness in the yonder hamlet," replied the one from Dong.

"Oh! I too am going to have fun in





the village that lie on the other side," replied the Dingian.

"Before we proceed further, why don't we stand up on our hind legs and see what Ding and Dong actually look like from this hill-top!" suggested the Dongian, the wiser of the two.

"That's a fine idea indeed!" agreed the other.

So the two little frogs stood up tall on their hind legs, face to face, and fixed their eyes on the scene before them. Thus they looked for quite some time.

Then at last said the resident of Ding, after he had gazed his fill, "Listen, dear friend, your Dong looks just like my Ding!"

"Yes, yes, your Ding too looks just like my Dong!" returned the other in a surprised tone.

"If your village is the same as mine and mine the same as yours, then why take all the trouble to proceed further in the hope of finding something new and greater joy?"

pipled the froggy from Ding.

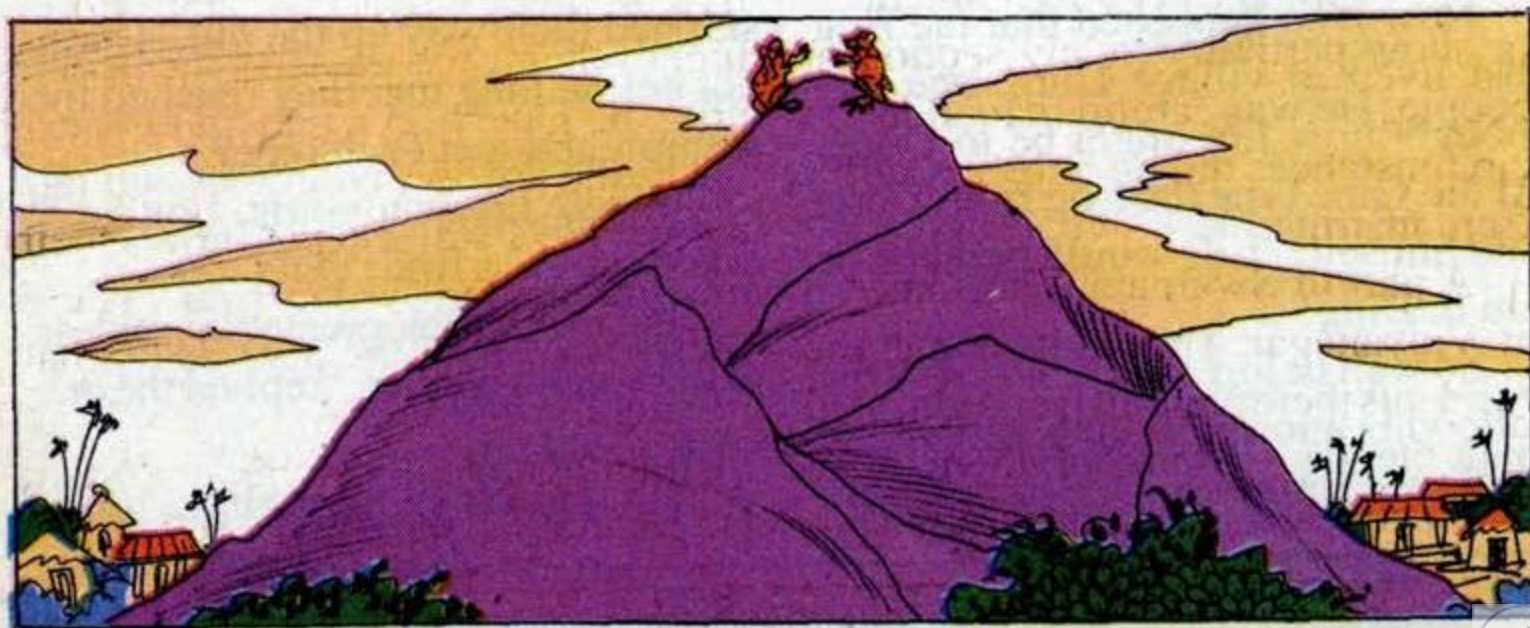
"You're right, brother! We can as well seek happiness in ourselves!" put in the one from Dong.

So the two little frogs started back once again to their respective wee little hamlets. They hopped and skipped and rolled all the way down the two verdant slopes of the little hillock.

But alas, the frog from Ding and the frog from Dong had quite forgotten that they had their eyes in the back of their heads. So standing the way they had, they had been looking at not what lay ahead but what lay behind them.

*So the poor little frogs of Ding and Dong,  
Do not really know to this very day,  
That their wee hamlets jolly with music and song,  
Are not in the least alike, think what they may!*

**—Retold by Anup Kishore Das**





# A Clash of personalities



**S**undaravarma was the King of Swarnapuri. He took great pains to ensure an efficient administration. He himself chose the village heads and saw to it that they did not remain in their respective villages for more than four years at a stretch. At the end of the four-year term, they were transferred.

This was to ensure that they did not have enough time to manipulate things or engage in corrupt practices, or show partiality to any section of people. He was careful that under no circumstances did his subjects suffer from misrule.

A part of Swarnapuri was known as Vidyanagar. True to its name, the residents there were all well-educated and literate. Many of them were intellectuals, too. Sundaravarma ap-

pointed Vidyasagar as its head. However, the king was not aware that the gentleman was of a haughty temperament and he was very selfish. He did not care for public welfare.

In no time Vidyasagar became unpopular with the people who began to agitate against the village headman. What began as whispers soon turned into public agitation. They chose Raghunath as their representative, to meet Vidyasagar and inform him of their problems. In the beginning, he gave him a patient hearing, but he did not do anything to alleviate the people's suffering. During their meetings later, Vidyasagar would brush him aside; he also began harassing him.

Raghunath was a selfless worker. He understood the people's problems





and tried to solve them to the best of his ability. He derived satisfaction from whatever help he could extend. Then why should Vidyasagar harbour animosity towards him? It was this that worried Raghunath. In fact, he had a reason to hate Raghunath, because he was someone who would call a spade a spade. He was frank in his attack against Vidyasagar's corruption and favouritism. He did not mince words in criticising Vidyasagar's actions.

One day, Vidyasagar was so angry that he asked Raghunath to leave Vidyanagar. Raghunath took up the matter with the residents of the village. They turned against Vidyasagar and demanded *his* departure from

Vidyanagar. The people resorted to an armed agitation and the matter came to such a head that Vidyasagar had to appeal to King Sundaravarma to send some soldiers to Vidyanagar.

Something like this has not happened at any time earlier. So, the king was baffled. Where did he go wrong? he wondered. How did matters come to a pass when his own representative had to ask for army help?

Sundaravarma decided to enquire the matter himself and went over to Vidyanagar. He met a cross-section of the people who confided in him. The king found that Vidyasagar alone was to be blamed for the state of affairs. He sent for the headman and warned him. Vidyasagar feared that he might lose the job of village headman. He asked for forgiveness from the king.

"Your majesty, you need not be kind-hearted towards Vidyasagar. He does not deserve your pardon," remarked Raghunath. "The best thing will be to dismiss him. That'll be a lesson to other headmen, too. On the contrary, if you were to forgive him, and allow him to continue in the post he'll only repeat his misdeeds. He deserves punishment."

Sundaravarma thought that there was some valid point in what Raghunath had remarked. He dismissed Vidyasagar from service and decided to administer Vidyanagar directly by himself. Vidyasagar did not



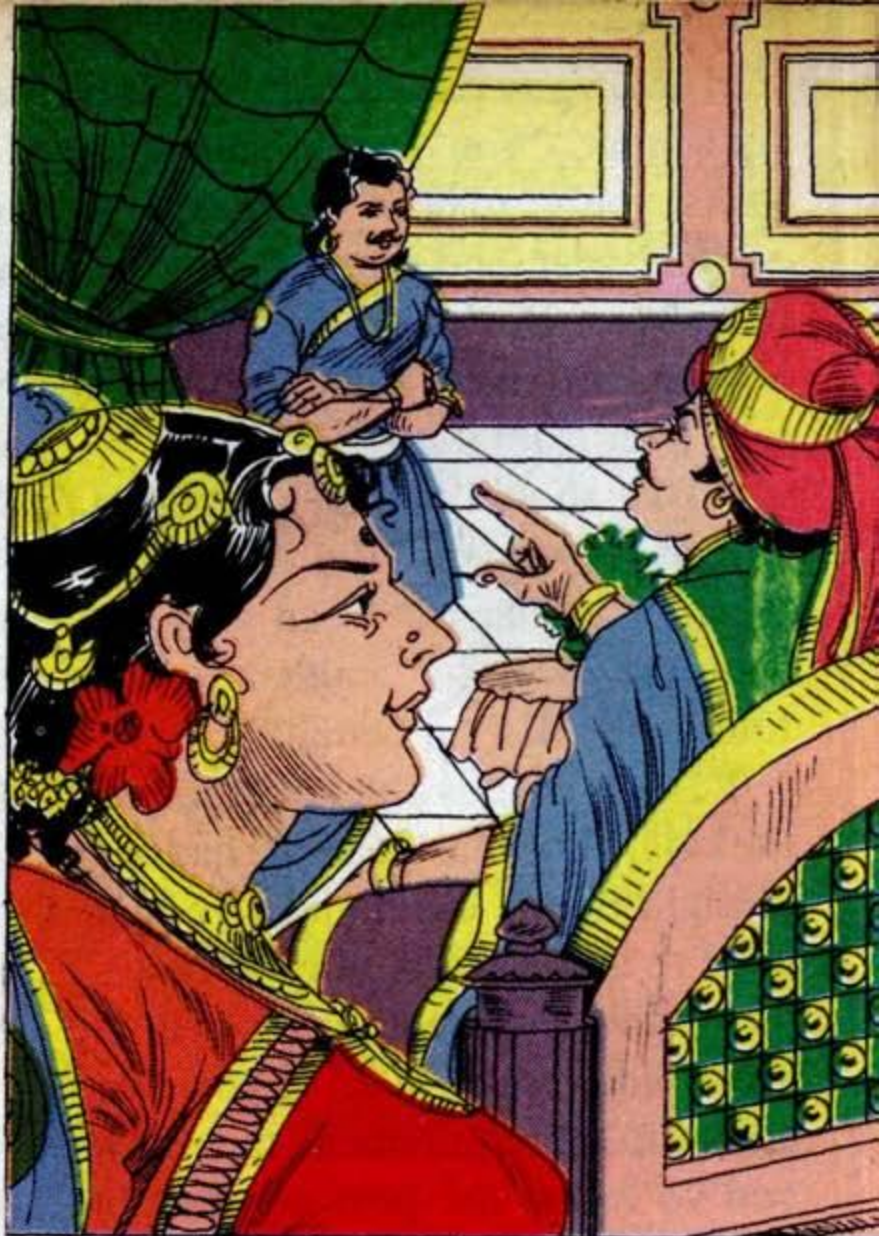


leave the place. He moved from one corner to another carrying tales against Raghunath, calling him cruel and a criminal and dishonest.

Nobody in Vidyanagar was keen to become its headman for fear of criticism by Vidyasagar. Years passed. King Sundaravarma was now in a fix. It was time Vidyanagar had its own headman. One day, on his visit to the place, he asked Raghunath, "Vidyanagar is the place where you were born and brought up. Why don't you take over as its headman?"

"I'm grateful to you for your offer, your majesty," Raghunath excused himself. "Nobody in Vidyanagar would dare take up the post. Because we had carried on an agitation against him and you had taken action, by dismissing him from your service. If anyone of us were to take up that post then he'll go on telling people that it was for grabbing the post that we brought accusations against him and agitated to remove him. Your majesty, it would be better if you appoint someone from outside Vidyanagar."

The king appreciated the stand taken by Raghunath. He could not find an iota of selfishness in him. And he had no lust for power or position. Sundaravarma was once again in a dilemma. However, by the time he returned to the capital, he had thought of a solution. There was Bharat, a distant relation of the queen, who could be entrusted with the post. He



called for him.

"Bharat," said Sundaravarma, "I want you to take over as headman of Vidyanagar. You may remain there for four years. There was Vidyasagar who was holding that post, but he mismanaged things and people suffered at his hands. So, I had to remove him. I'm sure you would be able to bring back its past glory. It was one of the finest villages in my kingdom."

Bharat was clever, but he had no craze for power. He took over the responsibility only because the king persuaded him. Anyway, Vidyanagar soon became a model village. Bharat and Raghunath maintained good relations with each other.





Three years passed. The king sent for Bharat. "You've completed three years; you've to be in Vidyanagar for another year, and then I'll send you elsewhere. But before that, you must advise me who I should choose to take over from you."

"That should not be a problem," Bharat responded. "But why should there be a change? I can very well continue there for another term of four years. Isn't it better?"

"That's not possible, Bharat," said the king. "The four-year rule had been brought by me only; and I've managed to enforce this rule till now. I can't show an exception. You should also abide by the rule. If you don't adhere to the requirement, that shows you've found the post comfortable and to your advantage."

Heart of hearts, Bharat did not like a transfer. "Do I need a transfer? After all, I did not apply for the post. You had called for me and suggested that I took over as headman of Vidyanagar. You know very well that I don't have any lust for power. The people have cooperated with me very well. And there are no problems. You are aware of all that. The place has shown wonderful progress in the last three years. So, why should I be shifted?"

"Whatever you might say, I cannot change the rule for your sake," said King Sundaravarma.

"You may have to change the rule,"

snapped Bharat.

From that day, Bharat was a new man. He began to show his superiority to Raghunath, and Raghunath alone. To all others, he was a picture of all courtesy, and he went all out to help everybody, except Raghunath.

Raghunath called on the king, and complained about Bharat. "He is unnecessarily harassing me. How long can I brook such humiliation? He doesn't recognise me as the people's representative. He doesn't even discuss matters with me. You've to shift him from there, your majesty."

A few days later, the king sent for Bharat and conveyed to him what Raghunath had told him. He asked Bharat to leave Vidyanagar and take over another village.

Bharat protested. "Let me tell you something. Raghunath thinks that he is a more prominent person in the village than the village headman. He doesn't want to obey me. Has anyone else in Vidyanagar brought any complaint about me? If so, I shall give up my post immediately."

Sundaravarma did not take a decision then and sent Bharat away. But he began making enquiries. He found that Raghunath was harbouring a personal grudge against Bharat and that was at the back of his complaints about him. He now sent for both of them. "You





two are educated, intelligent, and capable. Therefore, there cannot be any difference of opinion between you two. All right, even if differences crop up, you could have settled them yourself without bringing them to my knowledge. Why should you allow such differences of opinion to affect the progress of the village?"

Bharat was the first to respond. "What you say is true. A part of the blame I have to bear. But I can assure you that there won't be a repetition of that. I give you my assurance."

Raghunath followed suit and gave his own assurance to the king. Sundaravarma turned to Bharat and said, "I'm not shifting you from Vidyanagar for the time being. You may continue there."

After Bharat and Raghunath had left the royal presence the minister turned to the king: "So, you've given up your rule of the four-year term?"

To which Sundaravarma gave a long reply. "All the trouble happened because of the personal rivalry between Bharat and Raghunath. No one else in Vidyanagar had made a complaint against Bharat. In fact, under his administration, the village registered a lot of progress. Everybody is happy. When that is the state of affairs, why should he be shifted from Vidyanagar? Nobody should be transferred for reasons purely personal. Some people, who had resisted transfers, had been forcibly shifted. I now feel that I shouldn't have done so. Now I've realised that no rule should be enforced without any actual necessity."

"I'm happy, your majesty," remarked the minister. "Both Bharat and Raghunath are intelligent. But your majesty has proved to be more intelligent." When he said this, he was his most humble self; there was no hint of any flattery.





# His Choice



**P**avanapur was famous for many things. It had a beautiful Siva temple. Not far away from the temple was a large park and a garden full of flowering trees. It boasted a library with a collection of priceless books. Of course, it was equally well known for its troupes and the dramas they staged.

Partha's uncle was a prominent citizen of that place. He had four sons - Madhav, Govind, Sreedhar, and Kanhaiya. Partha was of the same age as, Madhav. He had come to Pavanapur to spend his vacation with his cousins, who were happy to have him for company. Madhav took him along with him to be shown round the town.

"What a lovely place!" Partha gave expression to his joy. "I wish I could

stay back for ever and for ever." The brothers were surprised to hear Partha's remarks. They asked him which part of the town had attracted him most.

"Oh! That's a difficult question!" exclaimed Partha. "I wouldn't be able to choose one part or another. I've a suggestion. Let each one of us go round the place once again, and come back and discuss our choice. I too shall express my opinion then."

They all started in different directions. Two of them came back by evening; the other three took an extra day to return. The five of them now sat together and recounted their experiences. None of them was able to pin-point any particular place that had attracted them most.

"See that!" said Partha. "You all







have found it difficult to make a choice. Every part appears lovely, isn't it? That shows you've no prejudices or preferences."

The brothers did not quite agree with Partha's argument. "All right, Partha, where did you go? Have you been able to make a choice?" questioned Madhav.

"Do I have to tell you that?" Partha said, teasingly,

The others attempted some guesses.

"The temple?" one of them asked him.

"The park?" asked another.

"The library?" asked a third one.

"Or one of the theatres?" That came from the fourth brother.

"Come on, let's hear about your choice!" they chorused.

Partha put out a big smile. "My brothers! Pavanapura is nothing but lovely. But, mind you, there are several other places equally lovely. Haven't you heard of Kasi? Mathura? Rameswaram? Those places, too, have beautiful temples. Why didn't I go to one such place for my holidays? Why did I come to Pavanapur, of all places? After all, I have an uncle, aunt, and four cousins only in this place! None of the other places has any of my relations. I can't get their affection and love anywhere else. That's why I said Pavanapur is a lovely place. In fact, it's the loveliest of all places. Any doubt about this?"

The four brothers had by then fallen silent. They nodded their head. "Yes, Partha, you're very right!" they said in unison.

- The Voice of the people is the voice of God
- Diet cures more than doctors





## A change of opinion

**K**armaveer lost his parents even when he was a child. He was brought up by his grandmother. The boy was intelligent and studious. After he finished schooling, he got a job in the nearby town. He was reluctant to leave his ageing grandmother, and go and stay in the town. He insisted on her joining him, but she did not want to leave the old house and the compound around and so did not accompany him. He entrusted her care to his grown-up sister and left for the town.

Four years went by. Karmaveer used to go home and look up his grandmother occasionally. One day, he was informed that she was seriously ill. He rushed back to his village. She was very happy on seeing him. "You've come, Karma! Oh! what a

relief! If only I could also see you with a wife, I would only be too glad to bid farewell to this world for ever!"

Karmaveer smiled, because he had been dreaming of a perfect wife for himself. His preference was for a town-bred girl, merrily flitting here and there like a butterfly. "Is that all, grandma?" he responded. "Just as you wish. I shall bring a bride, but let's wait till you recover from your illness."

"Oh! Don't wait till I get all right," the old lady chided him, affectionately. "You know I've been having indifferent health for the past two years. It may persist for some more years. Why should you waste your time? I've already seen a suitable bride for you. And tomorrow is an auspicious day. Don't bother about



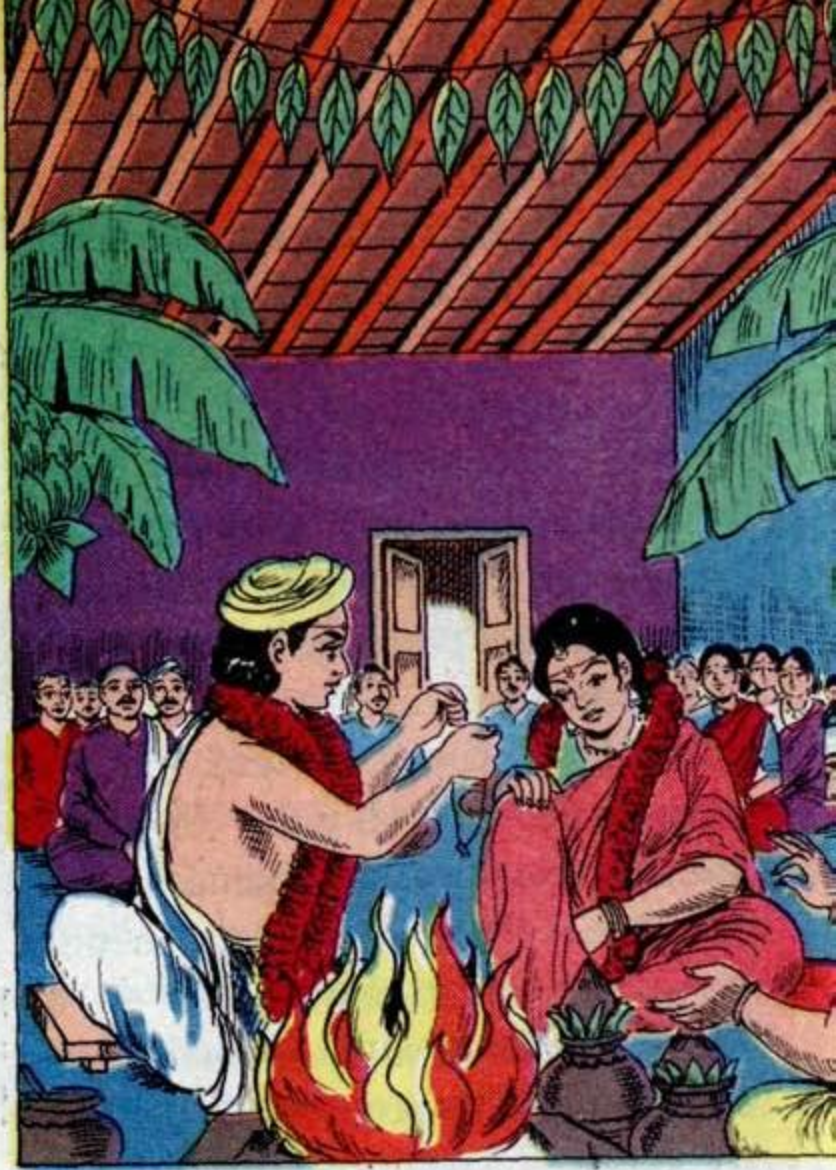
formalities. You must marry her immediately.”

What a sudden decision! thought Karmaveer. But how could he go against the wishes of his grandmother who had brought him up all these years? Would the bride she had chosen for him have the attributes of his dream girl? Anyway, with much hesitation, Karmaveer gave his assent. The next day he married Kantimati.

As he did not have many days leave, Karmaveer decided to return to the town with his wife three days after their marriage. They went to take leave of his grandmother. “I’ve a wish to fulfil, Karma,” she said, holding his hand. “I had promised a silk shawl for our family deity if your marriage were to take place. You both must visit the temple and offer the shawl to Lord Balaji. But don’t delay the visit.”

On their way to the town, Karmaveer advised his wife, “You’re seeing a town for the first time. You may not be familiar with life there. You should watch the womenfolk and change your ways quickly. Don’t continue to be a rustic.”

Kantimati took her husband’s instructions seriously and in no time changed her mode of dress and acquired new jewellery. She now looked a fashionable young woman. A whole month passed. One day she reminded Karmaveer. “Don’t you remember the offering grandmother wanted us to give at the temple? We



haven’t attended to it till now. Let’s not delay it any more.”

“I don’t think we can go now,” said Karmaveer, apologetically. “I can’t get any leave. In fact, my boss has warned me against taking any more leave.”

Kantimati, however, insisted that they visited the Balaji temple at the earliest. “Isn’t your boss’s name Venkatachalapati? Probably his family deity is also Balaji,” Kantimati argued. “Tell him that you’ve to make an offering to Venkatachalapati and that you want leave to go to the temple and attend to the formalities. I’m sure he’ll grant you leave.”

“I’ve my own doubt, Kanti,” said Karmaveer, after some contemplation.



“Anyway, as the suggestion has come from you, I shall go and ask him.”

The next day, Karmaveer went to his boss. “Sir, I’ve to make an offering to our family deity, Venkatachalapati. I would like to have two days leave—just two days, sir.”

“Oh!so, your family deity is also Venkatachalapathi?” said the boss, putting out a wide smile. “All right, you may take two days leave.”

Karmaveer was happy. His wife’s guess had proved correct. In the evening he rushed home. “You gave me the best idea! I’ve secured two days leave. Now get ready. We must leave early in the morning.”

He continued, as if he remembered something. “You remember the gold bangles my sister had given you? keep them safe in the box. We’ll have it exchanged for a new pair at the jeweller’s.”

Kantimati did just as her husband told her. They started for the temple. By evening, they reached the place. There was just one choultry for the pilgrims. Karmaveer went to the keeper and requested for a room. “I’m sorry, sir, all rooms are occupied; there’s no vacancy,” the man said, spreading his fingers.

Kantimati was listening to the conversation. She turned to her husband. In an angry tone, she remarked, “Then, why did you say that you have a standing invitation from the owner, Devappa? You were

just boasting, weren’t you?”

Were the visitors the choultry owner’s guests? wondered the keeper. Suddenly, he changed his attitude. “I’m sorry I didn’t know that you’re my master’s guests,” he said with all humility. “I think there’s one room vacant; you can have that.”

He then led the couple to the room and made them comfortable.

As he turned round and went away, Karmaveer complimented his wife. “Tell me, how do you know Devappa?”

“Who said I know Devappa?” Kantimati responded, with a mild laughter. “As we came in, I saw a tablet on the wall mentioning his name as the owner of this choultry and that it is in memory of his father! I remembered the name, and that came in handy!”

“You’re very clever, Kanti,” said Karmaveer.

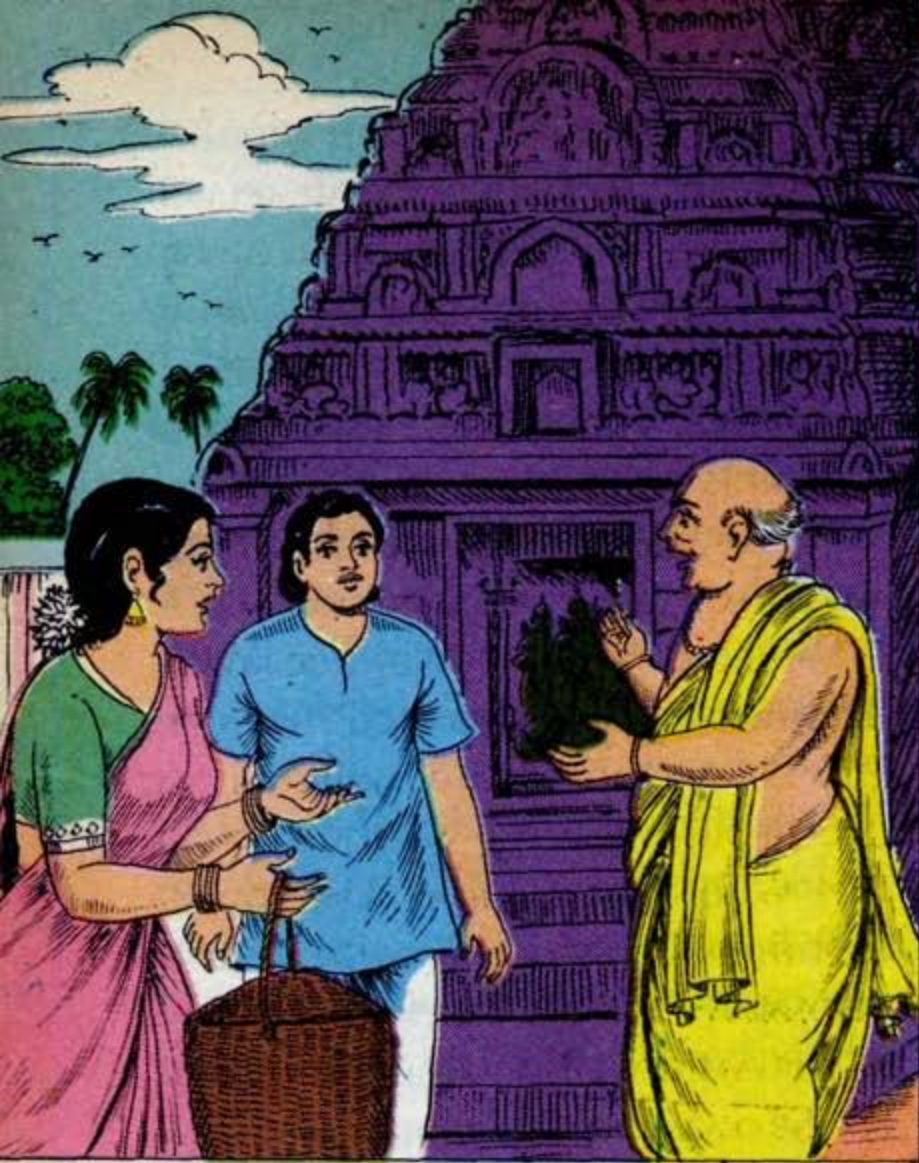
They went for a bath and got ready to go to the temple. By the time they reached the place, they found the pujari about to lock the *sanctum sanctorum* after the customary pujas.

“Sorry, sir, all the pujas are over,” said the priest. “Please come back tomorrow morning. You can then have all your offering made.”

“What a pity!” exclaimed Kantimati. “We were expecting to make our offering and also do some special pujas and place this on the tray while we accepted *prasad* from







you! That was the instruction from our grandmother. It doesn't matter. We shall drop it in the hundi and go away. We don't wish to take it back."

The pujari suddenly realised what he was being denied. "It doesn't matter. I shall open the temple and do whatever puja you wish to perform," he said unashamedly. "Let me have your offering for the deity."

He opened the door, lit the lamps once again, and performed the pujas, after adorning the idol with the red silk shawl that Karmaveer's grandmother had sent with him. When the priest brought the prasada, Kantimati kept a silver coin on the tray and also placed a small packet for the pujari.

Karmaveer was thus an eye witness

to his wife's cleverness once again. "If you hadn't been with me, I would have simply gone back without performing any puja here. All's well that ends well. But you never told me about that packet. How much money was inside?"

Kantimati once again laughed. "Money? There was no money in it. There were only camphor packets for *arti*."

"There's only one thing left now—our visit to the jeweller," said Karmaveer. "You go to the choultry and get hold of the bangles, and come to the jeweller. I shall wait for you there."

Kantimati opened the room and went inside to open her box, when she heard footsteps and turned round. A stranger was at the door. "I've come from the jeweller. I have been asked to take the gold bangles from you and rush to the shop."

"The bangles alone? Or the necklace also," queried Kantimati. "You go back and check with your master and then come here."

The man posed as if he was trying to recollect his memory. "I'm sorry. My master did mention about the necklace, too."

"You rascal!" Kantimati shouted. "You're a thief. You overheard what my husband told me, and then came here to cheat me, didn't you?" she was boiling with anger. "Thief! Thief!" she shouted for help. "Please come! Tie him up and



hand him to the police!

The thief by then made good his escape. When Karmaveer did not see his wife for sometime, he came to the choultry to find out what was happening. When Kantimati told him about the thief, he once again praised her for her resourcefulness.

They then went to the jeweller and had the old bangles exchanged for new ones.

Next day they returned to their house in the town. To their surprise and dismay, they found the lock on the door broken open. Karmaveer tried to push the door; it would not open. Evidently, there was an intruder inside. He was about to shout for help. Kantimati covered his mouth and cautioned him. She went up to the door and knocked twice. "Sir! Madam! We're wayfarers from another place. We're strangers to this town. We've some valuables with us. Can we stay back here for the night? That'll be a great help!"

The door was flung open. One look at the man, and the husband and wife knew that he was a thief. "Come in, come in. You may please stay here overnight," the man invited them.

Karmaveer and Kantimati stepped inside. The next moment, she opened her bag and pulled out a pouch. "Please keep this safe for us. There are a few ornaments and some cash. We'll take it back in the morning," said Kantimati without arousing any suspicion.

The thief moved into another room inside, opened a shelf and kept the pouch in a corner. In a trice, Kantimati closed the room from outside and told her husband, "Please go and bring the police."

The thief was soon taken away by the police. When the couple at last closed the door behind them, Karmaveer said, "Kanti, it was my mistake to have taken you for a rustic from the village. But you're really clever and intelligent. I'm changing my opinion about you!"







**What is the difference between a regular budget and a vote on account?**

*-S.R. Gulukota, Manthani*

A regular budget includes the *anticipated* income and *anticipated* expenditure of the government envisaged for, let us say, one year. The figures are approximated and, at the end of the year, when the budget *estimates* for the succeeding year are presented, the final figures will have a bearing on the *actuals* of the previous year. In the Budget estimates, certain items are shown under vote on account, which are re-presented to the parliament when there is any delay in presenting the budget for the succeeding year. This enables the government to meet specific items of expenditure and for a limited period.

**What is 'Water table'?**

*-P. Srinivasa Rao, Sreekurmam*

The water table is the level below the surface of the ground where water can be found. Below a certain level—and this varies from place to place—there are fissures and pores in the strata of earth which are saturated with water. When ordinary wells and borewells are dug, we look for the water table. The lower the water table, the deeper the well has to be dug.

## From our Readers

### Correct page

The answer to question No. 7 (Golden Hour teasers - September) is not correct as given in the October issue.

*-Sourav Goopta, Calcutta*

All the answers to Teasers No.6 (September) appear on page 46 of October issue. The answers appearing on page 26 are of Quiz No.5 that had appeared in the August issue. -Editor.

### Enlightening

After a long gap, I happened to read *Chandamama*, which enlightened me a lot! Each and every page (September issue) is undoubtedly valuable. This magazine is helpful not only for students but also the elders. I am running an institute—an English Study-Centre—and I have directed my students to read *Chandamama* regularly. I would request you to start "Word Games" for increasing word power. I was especially attracted by the story 'Self-praise'.

*-A. Sreedharacharya Joshi, Wanaparthy*





# PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



S.G. Seshagiri



S.G. Seshagiri

Can you formulate a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other? You may write it on a post card and mail it to Photo Caption Contest, Chandamama, Vadapalani, Madras - 600 026, to reach us by the 25th of the current month. A reward of Rs. 100/- will go to the best entry which will be published in the issue after the next.

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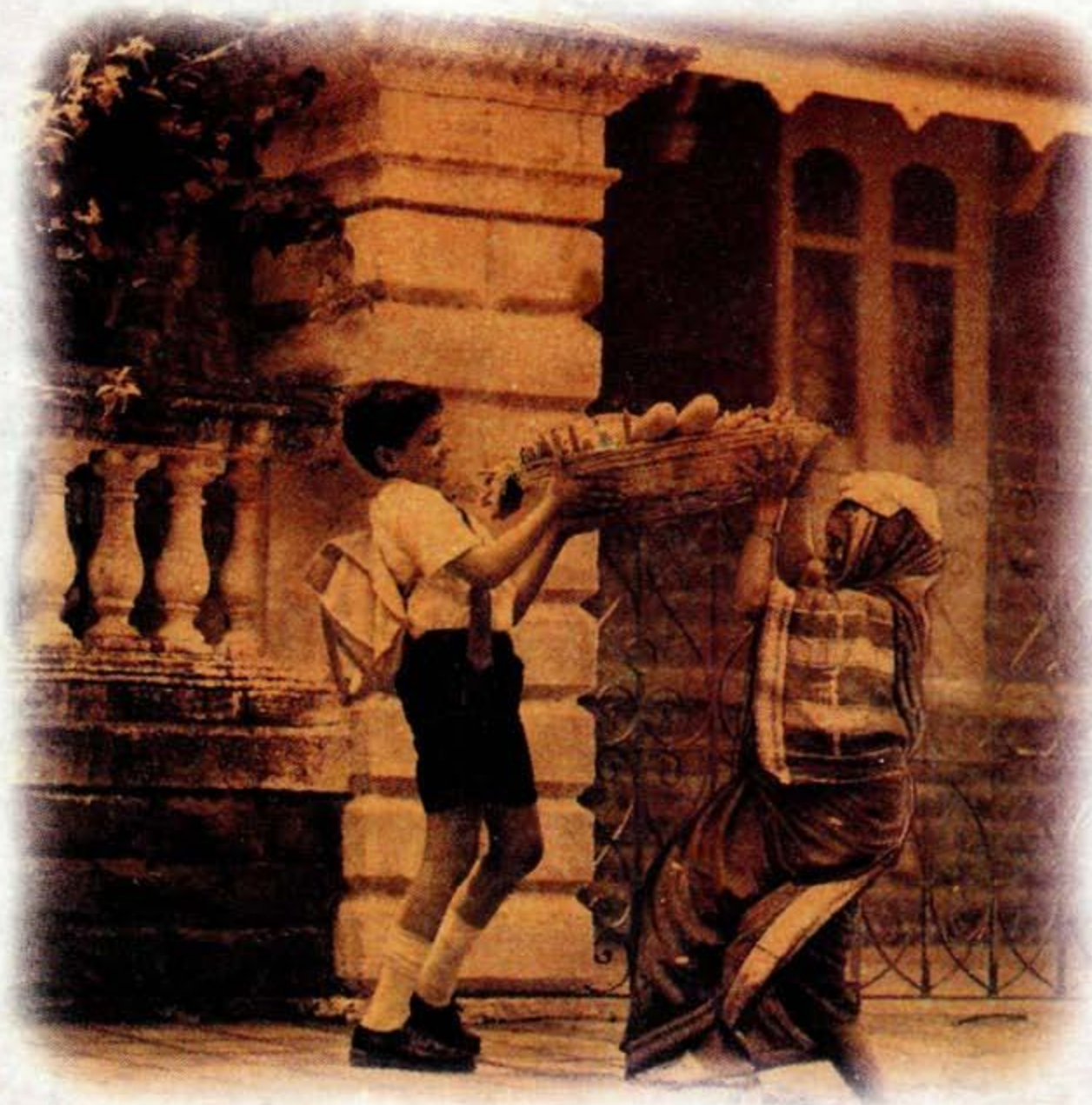
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